

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 27, 2021

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

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with recommended conditions for approval related to the Hyattsville Middle School project’s mandatory referral application.

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.

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.

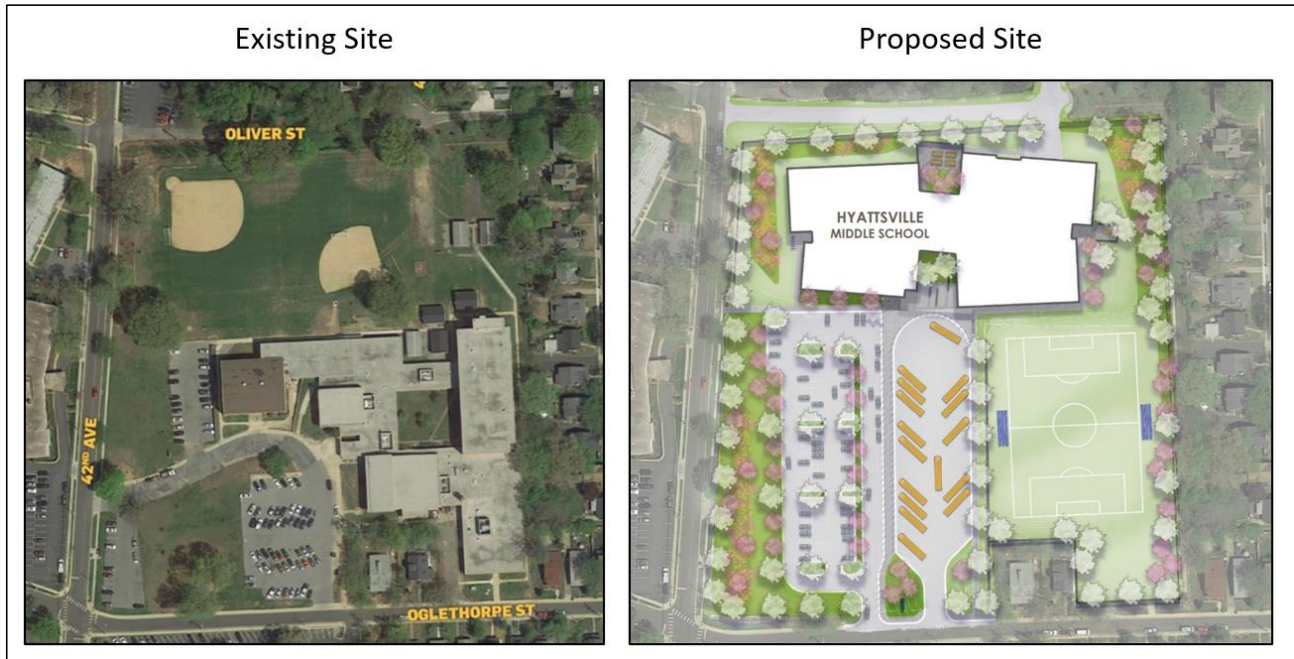


Figure 1. Site Comparison, Hyattsville Middle School

Planning Committee Review

The applicant presented to the Planning Committee on April 20, 2021. The Planning Committee generally responded positively to the proposal however had some traffic concerns.

The Planning Committee discussed stormwater mitigation, landscape plantings, and fencing concerns. In addition, the Committee talked about the importance of having multiple points of access to the site to improve pedestrian egress and reduce traffic congestion.

The Planning Committee passed the following motion:

The Planning Committee has concerns about traffic backing up on Oglethorpe, as there is only one proposed entrance/exit point to each parking lot. The Committee concurs with City Staff's recommendations with the exception of fencing the property along 42nd Avenue.

Minutes from the April 20, 2021 Planning Committee meeting are not yet available.

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 (specifically the mid-block pedestrian access at 42nd Avenue) for pedestrians and institute measures to ensure an accessible site design.
5. If warranted, 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

The M-NCPPC Planning Board is scheduled to conduct a hearing to consider MR-2038F on Thursday, May 20, 2020. Any recommendations adopted by the City Council at the May 3, 2020 meeting will be conveyed to the Planning Board before the M-NCPPC hearing.

Staff is recommending the City Council adopt the following motion:

“I move the City Council authorize the Interim Mayor to provide correspondence to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission in support of Mandatory Referral 2038F, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall categorize the police officer/crossing guard traffic direction at school access points as a necessary operational activity for the building as opposed to an optional school programming activity.
2. Striping shall be placed in front of school access points to avoid blockage. The striping shall include accompanying “Do Not Block” signage.
3. “No Standing or Stopping” signage shall be placed along 42nd Avenue to avoid blockage and congestion.
4. The site shall be reassessed for ADA compliance for pedestrians and the applicant shall institute measures to ensure an accessible site design. Specifically, the mid-block pedestrian access at 42nd Avenue shall be assessed for ADA compliance feasibility and conformance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
5. HAWK (High-Intensity Activated crossWalk) beacons at both the intersections of 42nd Avenue and Oglethorpe Street and 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street. If further review of the applicant’s transportation plan determines a HAWK system at not warranted, the City shall withdraw this condition at the time of the Planning Board hearing.
6. Fencing shall be extended along the west side of the property (42nd Avenue). Fencing shall be 4 – 6 feet. Plantings shall be included along the fence line facing the street for aesthetic purposes.
7. The applicant shall repair and/or replace storm drain lines on 42nd Avenue and Oliver Street as part of the project.”