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March 1, 2024

Denise Harris, AICP
Department of Community Development
Town of Warrenton
PO Box 341
Warrenton, VA 20188

RE: **Taylor Middle School Addition & Renovation – SUP 23-4**
2nd Review

Dear Ms. Harris,

Below are the responses as shown in *italic* to your comments dated February 9, 2024 for the above referenced project.

Planning Staff Comments

General:

1. The applicant should be aware that as presented the SUP, and if approved, subsequent Conditions of Approval, will apply to the entire parcel. If there are proposed modifications to Either Taylor Middle School or Brumfield Elementary the approved SUP Plan may need to be amended.

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

2. The applicant has indicated the fields are not to be lit.

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

3. Fauquier County approved the Arrington rezoning modifications to lift the age restriction proffer. If developed, the residential units located to the southwest will utilize both the elementary and middle schools. The applicant should be aware of the Concept Development Plan and Proffers related to this rezoning as it contains three development options. At this time, the property is located in the County with associated proffers. However, if it boundary line adjusts into the Town, several additional proffers will be triggered that may impact the schools.

Response: Comment noted. We have reviewed the referenced proffers as recommended.

Community Facilities:

4. The applicant provided for a right-of-way easement for a multi-use trail on the southern portion of the property adjacent to Walmart. However, there is no connection being built between the elementary and middle school or to the Community Center along the frontage of Shirley Avenue. Nor is there a sidewalk provided on the access road. This will lead to students and residents walking on the access road and through parking lots to create a potentially dangerous situation when mixed with vehicles.

Response: The SUP application has been revised to include a sidewalk along the proposed parent pickup/drop-off access road, that will extend from the Middle School, to the intersection with Alwington Blvd. The easement for the future shared use path cannot be proposed across the Community Center property, as that parcel is under different ownership. Additional coordination with Fauquier County will be required upon design and construction of the shared use path.

Historical Resources:

5. The applicant provided more detail on how the middle school will work to preserve the historical significance of the school. Town staff offers to help in any fashion on facilitating conversations regarding Historic Resources.

Response: Comment Acknowledged.

Transportation and Circulation:

6. The applicant provided right of way dedication for a multi-use trail on the southern portion of the property, but stated it does not intend to build walkable access points from the south or west to access the school. The existing sidewalk on a portion of Shirley will remain with the connection to the Greenway. The VDOT Pipeline Study is currently recommending this is upgraded to a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon, and a shared use path along the frontage of Shirley Avenue, from the crossing to the southern portion of the property.

Response: As discussed at the initial review meeting, the proposed public access easement is being provided for the future extension of a shared use path, that will extend south of the bus loop exit, to the southern property boundary. On the southern portion of the County-owned Community Center property, an additional public access easement is to be dedicated, to extend the shared use path west, to Alwington Blvd.

Additionally, a crosswalk and 5' sidewalk are being proposed from the Greenway, extending north along E. Shirley Avenue, in accordance with the Complete Streets Manual. This submission has also been revised to include a proposed sidewalk along the access road, that extends from Taylor Middle School, to the existing sidewalk at the intersection of Alwington Blvd, and the Brumfield Elementary School entrance.

While it is understood that the draft of the VDOT Pipeline Study is recommending a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at the crossing for the Greenway Trail, the study is not final, and has not been formally adopted by the Town in their Complete Streets manual, or Comprehensive Plan.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the pedestrian beacon be addressed with future development, that will receive VDOT funding.

Land Use and Character District:

7. There is no multi-modal infrastructure provided to the west or between the existing schools.

Response: This application has been revised, to include a sidewalk along the proposed parent pick up/drop off road at the rear of the property, that will extend from Taylor Middle School to the sidewalk at the intersection of the entrance of Brumfield Elementary School and Alwington Blvd. Though the School Board has identified potential safety risks in facilitating access to the school property during the school day, this sidewalk will allow for more efficient pedestrian connectivity from Alwington Blvd to E. Shirley Avenue, until the future shared use path is ultimately funded and constructed.

Transportation:

8. The applicant met with VDOT, the County, and the Town to discuss the larger transportation initiatives and the key role the school parcel plays. As a result of this meeting, the applicant modified the access road alignment and has indicated right-of-way dedication provisions for a multi-use trail on the southern portion of the property adjacent to Walmart and the frontage along Shirley Avenue. However, as the Pipeline Study has progressed, taking the ideas from this meeting into account, there are recommendations for a shared use path along Shirley Avenue from the Greenway crossing south and an upgraded Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.

Response: While it is understood that the draft of the VDOT Pipeline Study is recommending a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at the crossing for the Greenway Trail and extension of a shared use path, the study is not final, and has not been formally adopted by the Town in their Complete Streets manual or Town Plan. Therefore, it is requested to address the pedestrian beacon and final design and construction of the shared use path with a future project that will receive VDOT funding, as discussed at the initial review meeting.

Furthermore, a complete shared use path alignment cannot be provided along the frontage of E. Shirley Ave., as the School Owned property is bisected by the Fauquier County Owned Community Center. This application will accommodate the future shared use path on the subject property, by dedicating a public access easement across the property frontage as indicated on the plan.

Fauquier County Service District:

9. Fauquier County Board of Supervisors and the Warrenton Town Council have passed resolutions regarding the property owner of the Arrington parcels desire to boundary line adjust into the Town. The applicant is encouraged to review the rezoning and proffers approved by Fauquier County as they contain three development scenarios with proffers that may impact the schools. The applicant did take into account potential transportation improvements at the Brumfield entrance; however, there may be additional proffers related to sewer and other miscellaneous items that interest the applicant.

Response: Comment noted. The referenced proffers will be taken into consideration at the time of final site plan, assuming the Arrington property development is moving forward ahead of the proposed Taylor MS project.

Town Attorney

10. The proposed 12' retaining wall shown on the plan page C3.01 is an ongoing safety issue for a middle school campus. The presence of a 42" fence at the top, as addressed in the Timmons Group Jan. 12 letter, does not necessarily mitigate the impact of this safety issue under the circumstances presented. The justification advanced for the retaining wall in excess of 6' consists solely of (1) minimizing impact to wetlands, (2) minimize clearing on that side of the building adjacent to the proposed emergency access road, and (3) maintaining the existing gravel track and diamond field. Those are design choices that do not dictate the creation of a retaining wall twice the height of a by-right retaining wall.

Response: The retaining walls are not proposed for the convenience of design, but are a result of existing site constraints, and the School's desire to maintain existing site features. On the north side of the site, the wall is proposed to accommodate fire access around the existing building, that does not currently meet Statewide Fire Prevention code (Section 503.1.1).

The fire protection code requires new construction to provide fire access within 150' of all portions of the building, while existing nonconforming construction is not required, unless there is a proposed addition along that portion of the building. Since this portion of the building is existing and not being changed with this project, the access is not required to be updated. The Client has chosen to incorporate emergency access for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. The existing finish floor elevation of the building, the constraints provided by the wetlands, and existing site grades, require the wall at the proposed height in order to provide the emergency access.

Similarly, the retaining walls around and adjacent to the athletic fields are required, due to the existing finish floor elevation of the building and resulting existing grades of the facilities. The 42" fall protection guard located at the top of the wall will be proposed as required by IBC requirements (Section 1015.2).

If the walls will not be permitted as proposed, the track, rectangular field and diamond field would be impacted such that they would no longer be a useable amenity for the school and surrounding community. It should be noted that there are existing Fauquier County Public School facilities, including Fauquier High School, which is also located within the Town, that have similar retaining wall conditions. Per the Schools, there are no known instances where student or public safety has been compromised. Furthermore, there are other instances within the Town where similar conditions exist (i.e. Northrock Shopping Center). During the site plan process, efforts will be made to reduce the effective wall height where possible.

11. The project narrative references a site plan; this is incorrect.

Response: The project narrative on sheet C1.01 has been revised to "SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN."

12. Site Information Note 2 references a "Jeffrey A. Smeraldo" without indicating his affiliation or qualifications.

Response: Note 2 on sheet CI.01 has been updated to include Jeffrey A. Smeraldo's affiliations and qualifications.

13. Note 7 (on floodplain coverage) is unclear because the portions after the first semicolon lack a verb. This needs to be rewritten for clarity.

Response: The provided language was referenced from FEAM Firm 51061C308C, however we have updated it for clarity.

Town Transportation Consultant – Liz Byrom, PhD, PE and Chris Tiesler, PE, PTOE

1. Volumes between Site Entrances on Shirley Avenue are still not balanced even though there are no driveways between the intersections that could result in the addition/subtraction of trips. For example, on Figure 8-1, 42 trips are added southbound on Shirley Avenue between Site Entrance #2 and #3 during the AM peak hour. Other smaller imbalances between Site Entrances #1, #2, and #3 exist in all three study time periods and analysis scenarios. Because Site Entrances #2 and #3 operate with minor-street stop control, mainline volumes on Shirley Avenue and the availability of gaps in those traffic streams directly influence the calculated levels of service (LOS), capacity, and forecast 95th percentile queue lengths of critical movements. While the reported traffic operational results indicate that the minor-street stop-controlled movements generally operate within acceptable operational thresholds, these imbalances (and other revisions noted below that may impact traffic operations) should be corrected.

Response: All volumes have been checked and balanced where necessary.

2. The TIA does not discuss anticipated pedestrian or bicycle activity between the elementary and middle schools, and the site plan does not identify a route or designated facility to provide for such activity/movements. Given the nature of the middle school and surrounding land uses, pedestrian and bicycle activity between and amongst the residential development (Arrington Development), two school campuses, and the adjacent community center are likely and should be addressed/accommodated.

Response: The TIA has been updated to include a discussion of the pedestrian/bicycle accommodations within the site. However, no reductions in traffic have been taken for pedestrians or bicycles.

3. The revised site plan provides approximately 70 feet of throat depth for exiting traffic at Site Entrance #3. However, the analysis shows that during the 2032 School PM peak hour, the forecast 95th percentile queue will be 100 feet. Under this condition, one to two vehicles in the queue will still be stored along the internal perpendicular drive aisle (could be from either direction or both), which may adversely impact on-site circulation and parking maneuvers for several parking spaces in the vicinity of this internal intersection. The current location of Site

Entrance #3 in the middle of the parking field also creates unusual "dead end" parking drive aisles closest to Shirley Avenue. Parking maneuvers in these drive aisles may be difficult and could also lead to this portion of the parking lot being underutilized. See Attachment A for a rough sketch of an alternative alignment/location for Site Entrance #3 that may provide better separation of parent pick-up/drop off activity and parking circulation. Our cursory review indicates that the northbound left-turn lane on Shirley Avenue could be shifted south to this new entrance and still be developed within the available physical distance between this entrance and the adjacent community center driveway to the south.

Response: The proposed parking lot entrance (Entrance #3) has been revised, as suggested in the comment. The proposed throat exceeds 50' as required by VDOT standards, while maintaining access to and maintaining the existing condition with the adjacent Community Center, and keeping all proposed improvements on the school site.

4. It is unclear what on-site route parents doing pick-up/drop-off should take after entering Site Entrance #3. Does the school intend to have staff direct parents to the appropriate path in order not to complicate student pick-up/drop off? Is wayfinding signage proposed on-site? The current layout of the parking lot will tend to mix vehicles parking and those performing pick-up/drop-off activities, which could create added friction and on-site circulation challenges.

Response: All parent pickup and drop-off will utilize the new access road from Brumfield Elementary School, and the loop at the rear of the middle school, which provides stacking for ±80 vehicles as shown on sheet C3.04. Also, as noted on sheet C3.04, School staff will block access from the parking lot from E. Shirley Avenue, to prevent traffic from backing up into the right of way. Outside of the designated times for pick up and drop off, the access road will be gated to prevent cut through traffic from the future Arrington Development as noted on sheet C3.01.

5. Page 1-5: Per comments above, the expansion of the middle school will impact local connectivity, especially with the elementary school. Kittelson recommends replacing "no impact on the surrounding network" text with additional narrative that better reflects the anticipated circulation and travel patterns of all modes between the adjacent land uses (two schools, nearby residential development, and community center) as well as planned parent pick-up/drop-off routing of kiss-n-ride vehicular traffic.

Response: The narrative has been updated as requested.

6. The Synchro files are not utilizing appropriate peak hour factors (PHF) in the future conditions. For example, the intersection of Shirley/Culpepper in the existing conditions has a PHF of 0.88. In the 2026 background conditions, it increases to 0.94. Another example is that the James Madison Highway/Alwington Boulevard intersection has a PHF of 0.86 in the existing conditions and 0.95 in 2026 conditions. Per TOSAM, the future conditions analyses should assume a default PHF of 0.92 when PHF is lower in existing conditions.

Response: All PHF factors have been checked and updated in future models to 0.92 or the existing, whichever is higher except as noted in the report (school entrances).

7. The special use permit plan (C3.01) shows storage lengths that are not consistent with the storage listed on page 6-4. The western entrance (Site Entrance #1) right turn has storage of 85 feet and taper of 50 feet. The northbound left turn for this entrance has 50 feet of taper length that is not included in the model. Per TOSAM, Synchro and SimTraffic models should reflect "effective storage length", which is equal to the existing striped storage length plus half of the taper length.

Response: All storage lengths have been checked and updated. The effective storage shown on Figure 2-1, Figure 5-1, the LOS tables, and the Synchro analysis files all match with the revisions.

8. Design plans and traffic analyses should be updated to address these comments so that the operational performance and anticipated queue lengths at the Site Entrances are still adequate and forecast queues can be stored within available turn lane lengths and will not adversely impact on-site circulation or parking maneuvers. After these changes, please confirm that queues are still maintained within the provided storage.

Response: The analysis has been updated and the queues confirmed to be maintained within the available storage.

9. Page 2-1: There appears to be a typo "Route 17 carries approximately 9,7000 vehicle per day." In addition, we recommend using consistent naming conventions throughout the document when referring to roadways (e.g., Route 15 versus US 15).

Response: The above noted typo has been fixed in the report.

10. Page 2-2: The sentence "No VDOT traffic data available for Alwington Boulevard" is not needed as volumes are provided in the following sentence.

Response: The above noted comment has been addressed in the report.

11. Page 3-3: We recommend that actual lane widths be approximated rather than a standard 12' for all approaches. The existing lane widths along Shirley Avenue appear to be closer to 11'.

Response: All lane widths have been update to the actual width.

12. Page 6-2: We recommend that sub bullet 'a' be separated from bullet '6' like you have done in other sections.

Response: The above noted comment has been addressed in the report.

13. Typos are present in the operational summary tables. For example, the WBT at Culpepper St/Shirley Ave in the 2026 Background - School PM peak show a delay of 2.7 seconds and a LOS of A. However, the Synchro results show that the calculated delay is 22.7 seconds and has a LOS of C. All tables should be reviewed and corrected. Related text should also be updated.

Response: All tables have been checked and updated as necessary.

14. Synchro: We recommend all analysis files and level of service tables be updated to reflect any changes related to the comments above.

Response: All files and tables have been checked and updated as necessary.

15. Page numbers appear to be off. For example, Section 6 starts on page 6-2.

Response: The above noted comment has been addressed in the report.

Zoning – Amber Heflin, CZO

Article 7- Parking:

1. Overall, the plan appears to meet parking space requirements and provides one additional space. Staff will verify the proposed spaces will meet the required minimum dimensions at the time of site development plan. **The applicant will be required to demonstrate that parking stalls and drive aisle widths will meet minimum requirements at the time of site plan submission. Staff is unable to determine that these requirements have been met at this time.**

Response: Comment Acknowledged. Parking and proposed drive isles are proposed in accordance with Section 7-17 for 90 degree parking (9'x18' spaces with 24' wide drive isles. Dimensions have been noted on the plan.

2. Provide justification that two loading spaces will be adequate to handle the needs of the use. Justification with this submission is utilizing calculations within the Fauquier County Zoning Ordinance. The Town has separate requirements located under Article 7-18 of the Town of Warrenton Zoning Ordinance. Revise justification.

Response: As approved in the attached email, the loading spaces for institutional uses are not defined by the Ordinance. As proposed, the loading spaces are consistent with other school facilities and the surrounding localities.

Article 8- Landscaping:

3. Staff is unable to verify landscaping requirements as no landscaping details have been provided. The statement of justification provided by the applicant notes landscaping will be addressed at the time of site plan submittal. **The applicant will be required to address landscaping at the time of site plan submittal. Zoning staff is unable to complete a full review to verify that landscaping requirements have been met at this time.**

Response: Comment Acknowledged. Noted buffer locations have been and are shown on the proposed plan. Additional details will be provided at the time of site plan.

Article 9-8- Lighting:

4. The statement of justification acknowledges all lighting must meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. All fixtures on site will require conformance to current lighting standards, and photometric plan will be reviewed at the time of site plan submittal. **The applicant will be required to address site lighting at the time of site plan submittal. Zoning staff is unable to complete a full review to verify that lighting requirements have been met at this time.**

Response: Comment noted. Detailed lighting design that complies with Article 9-8 will be provided at the time of site plan.

5. The applicant provided a preliminary photometric plan for review with the SUP submittal, and staff is concerned that the site lighting proposed along Shirley Avenue will exceed 1.0 footcandle at the property line.

Response: The photometrics have been adjusted to prevent lighting from exceeding 1.0 footcandle at the property line.

6. Fixture cutsheets have not been provided for the proposed wall mounted lighting. Staff is unable to verify if proposed lights will meet Zoning Ordinance requirements. **The applicant will be required to address site lighting at the time of site plan submittal. Zoning Staff is unable to complete a full review to verify that lighting requirements have been met at this time.**

Response: Comment noted. Detailed lighting design that complies with Article 9-8 will be provided at the time of site plan.

7. Complete lighting plan was not provided with this submittal. The photometric plan only shows site lighting within the travel ways. Revise. **The applicant will be required to address site lighting at the time of site plan submittal. Zoning Staff is unable to complete a full review to verify that lighting requirements have been met at this time. See previous comment regarding the photometric plan.**

Response: Comment noted. Detailed lighting design that complies with Article 9-8 will be provided at the time of site plan.

Emergency Service – James K. Swain

1. Access gates - the plans show they are locked during school hours. We need to design a plan where emergency services can gain access during emergencies.

Response: The proposed access gates are common on school sites. At the time of site plan, access will be granted via Knox Boxes, Knox Locks or other required means of access required by Emergency Services.

VDOT – Craig M. Simpson

1. US 17 Business (Shirley Ave) is currently being studied as part of the Project Pipeline. The Pipeline study identified the need for additional Bike and Ped connectivity along Shirley Ave. (Land Use)

Response: Comment Acknowledged. It is our understanding that the study is in draft form and not final nor has it been formally adopted by the Town for implementation.

2. The shared use path width (10' min) should be extended across East Shirley Ave. The current plan shows narrow CG-12 for the connection with Shirley Ave.

Response: The CG-12 at the connection to Shirley Ave. has been revised to a width of 10'. See sheet C3.01.

3. While the public access easement for the future trail extension of the shared use path appears to be conceptual feasible, the proposed grading needs to be confirmed in order to ensure that the shared path can be constructed in the future. VDOT recommends that the shared use path is rough graded with the future site plan. A typical cross section showing existing grades of Shirley Ave, future shared use path and proposed parking lot is recommended.

Response: A representative cross section has been provided on sheet C1.01, that illustrates the constructability of the shared use path along the school frontage.

4. The current/proposed entrance geometry does not appear to meet VDOT standards. The minimum entrance width is 30'. Since this road is within the Town jurisdiction, VDOT will defer to the Town. VDOT recommends that all proposed entrance radius are confirmed with Autoturn movements.

Response: The entrance width (and location) has been reconfigured to provide a minimum of 50' entrance throat as well as the minimum width of 30'. Note that final design will be provided during the time of site plan and it is intended to meet applicable VDOT standards.

5. The existing turn lane widths, length of storage, and taper lengths do not appear to meet VDOT min standards. VDOT understands that there are site constraints but standard turn lane geometry is recommended to ensure safety. The SUP plans do not provide enough detail to provide a complete review.

Response: The left and right turn lanes into the proposed parking lot have been updated to current standards. There are significant constraints at the right turn lane into the bus loop as a result of a drainage culvert, that drains from east to west below E. Shirley Avenue, existing grades, delineated wetland/stream, and wooded area. As a result of these constraints, full turn lane lengths cannot be provided without significant impact to the environmental features. As the turn lane is existing and the main intended use is to remain for bus traffic with relatively low volume, it is requested that the condition be left as it currently exists.

6. Advisory - The parent dropoff access road does not meet corner clearance min. of 225' from Alwington Blvd. Please note that since Alwington Blvd is not currently classified as a major roadway so this comment is advisory.

Response: Comment noted. However, the proposed road is internal to the site and should be considered a private access road.

7. The design speed for the parent dropoff access road to Alwington Blvd should be defined. The retaining wall appears to be within the clearzone of the private access road and should be located either outside of the clearzone or protected with guardrail.

Response: Additional information will be provided at the time of site plan. Should the wall be required to be within the clear zone, guardrail will be specified as needed.

8. Please ensure that clear zone is free of fixed objects and that the slopes within the clear zone meet the town's design requirements based on the proposed design speed.

Response: Clear zone will be further considered and additional detail will be provided at the time of final design and site plan.

9. VDOT recommends that the Town ensure that the internal parking lot and internal access roads will handle the school operations.

Response: Comment noted. The propose parking and access roads will be provided to meet all applicable Town and County codes and will support the School operations.

Should you have any questions regarding the above responses, please feel free to contact me (703) 554-6712.

Thank you,



Luke Fetcho
Senior Project Manager

Luke Fetcho

From: Denise Harris <dharris@warrentonva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 12:13 PM
To: Luke Fetcho
Cc: Patrick Van Nuys
Subject: RE: SUP 23-04 Taylor Middle School Second Round Agency Comments

Good afternoon Luke,

I ran your question by the Zoning Administrator who indicated that a calculation showing that the two proposed spaces are adequate for the use based off of typical school activities will be sufficient.

Thanks,
Denise

From: Luke Fetcho <Luke.Fetcho@timmons.com>
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 2:31 PM
To: Denise Harris <dharris@warrentonva.gov>
Cc: Patrick Van Nuys <Patrick.VanNuys@timmons.com>
Subject: RE: SUP 23-04 Taylor Middle School Second Round Agency Comments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Thanks for sending these Denise. In turn, please see the attached draft conditions of approval for review.

Also, I did a real quick review of the comments that were provided. One I have a question on is related to the loading space. The comment references back to Article 7-18 of the Ordinance, however Article 07-18 does not identify a requirement for an institutional/school use. It only lists for retail, office, and industrial uses. Therefore, we referred back to the County Ordinance for schools and provided the calculation based on the County requirements. The County requirement of 2 spaces is inline with what the Schools generally need and is consistent with what is provided on Middle Schools in other local jurisdictions.

Can you please let us know if the loading space calculation can be approved using the County requirement? Otherwise, can you provide guidance on to approach this calculation for an institutional/school use?

Thank you,

Luke Fetcho, PE, LEED AP
Project Manager

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