



Community Development
Department

STAFF REPORT

Commission Meeting Date:	April 9, 2024
Agenda Title:	Special Use Permit 2023-04 Taylor Middle School Expansion
Requested Action:	Hold a Public Hearing
Staff Lead:	Denise Harris, Planning Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Special Use Permit (SUP) 2023-04 Taylor Middle School Expansion, the Applicant, and the Owner, the Fauquier County School Board, seeks a SUP to expand the school the in excess of 10,000 square feet. The subject parcel is in the Public Semi Public (PSP) District of the Town of Warrenton Zoning Ordinance and is designated as Public/Semi Public Non-Intensive in the Greenway and Makers Character District on the Future Land Use Map. The subject parcel (GPIN 6984-48-7973-500) is located at 350 E. Shirley Avenue on approximately 39.1805 acres. The Applicant is seeking a waiver to allow for retaining walls to be built up to twelve feet on the property.

The Planning Commission held a Work Session on February 20, 2024. Commissioners raised concerns regarding conflict points in the transportation design in a number of locations, including the interaction with Brumfield Elementary. Commissioners raised the lack of intermodal access nor the a provision for pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and Brumfield. Commissioners expressed safety concerns regarding the prevalence and height of the multiple retaining walls. In conclusion, at the Work Session the Commissioners encouraged the Applicant to review the walkability of the site; to think more holistically about the use of the entire 39-acre property; and to reduce the transportation conflicts.

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on March 19, 2024, with draft Conditions of Approval based on the Applicant's March 1, 2024, resubmission. After three members of the public spoke, the Planning Commission recommended approval (5-0) to the Town Council based on Conditions of Approval that are consistent with other recent SUPs approved by the Town and add site specific conditions regarding the reservation of right-of-way for the upgrades to Alwington Boulevard to be built through a proffered Fauquier County rezoning for the Arrington property and dedication of easements for future shared use paths on Shirley and the southern portion of the property.

BACKGROUND

The Fauquier County School Board seeks to expand W.C. Taylor Middle School to consolidate it with Warrenton Middle School located on Waterloo Street. The approximately 39-acre property contains

frontage on Shirley Avenue and Alwington Boulevard, encompasses Brumfield Elementary, and is adjacent to WalMart and the Warrenton Community Center. Its location is an essential public property with the ability to link multiple neighborhoods, schools, community center, and Greenway by providing for walkable/bicycle friendly connections.

During agency review of the application, staff raised several issues mostly focused on the transportation circulation, lack of multi modal provisions, and conflict with Brumfield Elementary. The Applicant was made aware of the ongoing Virginia Department of Transportation Shirley Avenue Pipeline Study that recommends an upgrade Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon in front of the school property where it connects to the Greenway Trail; the Fauquier County Arrington Rezoning that includes proffers for transportation and pump station upgrades; Plan Warrenton 2040 Transportation Map, the Complete Streets Guide, and the Walkability Audit Report that speak to multi-modal goals; and the Town's ongoing offer to facilitate a conversation between the schools and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, which is interested in the African American history of the site.

Zoning staff indicated they cannot verify the proposal will meet multiple Zoning Ordinance requirements related to parking, lighting, and landscaping. The Applicant stated the intent to provide this information at time of Site Development Plan; however, this may result in a scenario where the constraints of the site as laid out are impacted.

The Planning Commission held a Work Session on this proposal on February 20, 2024. During that meeting the Planning Commission discussed transportation conflicts, the constraints of the site, the safety concerns of the heights of the retaining walls, the environmental features, the lack of multi-modal connections, and the relationship of the schools with Brumfield, the community center, the Greenway, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

On March 1, 2024, the Applicant submitted an updated SUP Plan in response to the second round of Agency Comments and Planning Commission Work Session. The Applicant restructured the access from the parking lots to Shirley Avenue and provided a sidewalk along the new access road. The Applicant continues to acknowledge that Zoning staff cannot verify landscaping, parking, or lighting requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met until the information is provided at time of site plan.

On March 19, 2024, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing. Three members of the public spoke to the application generally in favor of it. The Planning Commission members asked questions regarding the shared use path, sidewalks, retaining walls, and floodplains. The Applicant suggested alternative language to the required reservation of land for transportation improvements to Alwington Boulevard and asked that the condition requiring the grading for a future shared use path along Shirley Avenue be struck. The Planning Commission, after asking staff a number of questions, determined to not modify the Conditions of Approval, with the exception of clarification wording around exterior LED lighting. The Planning Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend approval to the Town Council per the draft Conditions of Approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission recommended approval to the Town Council subject to the draft Conditions of Approval.

Suggested Motions

1. I move that the Town Council approve of SUP 23-04, Taylor Middle School Expansion, to allow for the addition in excess of 10,000 square feet of approximately an additional 68,231 square feet, subject to the Conditions of Approval dated April 9, 2024, the Special Use Permit Plan consisting of 18 sheets created by RRMM Architects with Timmons Group dated September 7, 2023 and revised through March 1, 2024.

OR

2. I move that the Town Council forward SUP 23-04, Taylor Middle School Expansion to its meeting.

OR

3. I move an alternative motion.

OR

4. I move the Town Council deny SUP 23-04 Taylor Middle School Expansion for the following reasons...

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment A – Maps
2. Attachment B – March 19, 2024, Staff Analysis
3. Attachment C – March 1, 2024 Special Use Permit Plan
4. Attachment D – April 9, 2024 Draft Conditions of Approval
6. Attachment E – Statement of Justification
7. Attachment F – Agency Comments
8. Attachment G – March 1, 2024 Comment Response Letter
9. Attachment H – Staff Presentation from February 20, 2024 Work Session
10. Attachment I – Applicant Presentation from the February 20, 2024 Work Session
11. Attachment J – Staff Presentation from March 19, 2024 Planning Commission Public Hearing
12. Attachment k – Applicant Presentation from March 19, 2024 Planning Commission Public Hearing
13. Attachment L – Draft Resolution