

MEMORANDUM

To: Bryce Johnson, AICP, Project Manager, Land Use Review

From: Pat Giglio, Planner III, Community Planning

Date: August 30, 2021

Re: **CMPT-2021-0007 Dulles South Elementary School (ES-32)
Community Planning First Referral**

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Loudoun County School Board (LCSB) requests a Commission Permit (CMPT), to construct an additional elementary school on a portion of the 117-acre County owned subject property located west of Lightridge Farm Road south of Braddock Road. The application proposes to construct the elementary school in an open field on the interior of the property south of Collaboration Drive, northwest of future Hovatter Elementary School (ES-29) and northeast of Light Ridge High School (HS-9). The subject property received previous approvals for the construction of an elementary school, high school, and a public use site (CMPT 2017-0001) in April 2017, and a public utility service center within an existing barn (CMPT-2017-0005) in January 2018.



2021 Aerial of Property and Subject Site.

The application proposes the construction of a two-story, 111,500-square-foot elementary school with a student capacity of 960 students on an approximately 11-acre site located near the center of the property. Parking is provided on the northeast side of the school and is accessed from Collaboration Drive. A bus loop is located on the west side of the school and is accessed from Hovatter Drive. The school will share playing fields (one softball and one all-purpose field) with future Hovatter Elementary School (ES-29). The proposed elementary school (ES-32) is planned to

open in 2025 as identified in the Loudoun County School Board Adopted FY 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

The subject site is zoned TR-3-UBF (Transition Residential-Upper Board Run/Upper Foley), and while the public school use is identified as a permitted by-right in the Zoning District, approval of a CMPT is required for the proposed public use site in accordance with the Revised 1993 Zoning Ordinance. A CMPT is required when a public utility or public service facility is proposed to determine if the general location, character, and extent of the use is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

A review of County GIS data did not identify any natural, environmental and/or heritage resources that would be impacted by the proposed construction of the elementary school on the 11-acre subject site. The County will review additional documentation and analyze the site's natural, environmental and/or heritage resources during the site plan process.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The subject property is governed under the policies of the *Loudoun County 2019 General Plan* (2019 GP). The 2019 GP places the property within the Transition Policy Area (TPA) in an area identified as the Transition Large Lot Neighborhood Place Type where low-density residential neighborhoods, agricultural uses and extensive natural and manmade open space areas are envisioned (*2019 GP, Chapter 2, Transition Policy Area Place Types Map*). Public facilities, such as the proposed elementary school, are identified as conditional uses within the Transition Large Lot Neighborhood Place Type. The land use policies in Chapter 2 and the public facilities policies in Chapter 6 of the 2019 GP were used to evaluate the proposal.

LOCATION, CHARACTER, AND EXTENT

The application proposes the construction of an additional elementary school on an 11-acre portion of a 117-acre County-owned property occupied by future Hovatter Elementary School (ES-29) and Lightridge High School (HS-9). The property is located within the Transition Large Lot Neighborhood Place Type adjacent to existing residential lots and the community recreation facilities associated with the Greens of Willowsford. The 2019 GP anticipates that schools will be located proximate to the residential communities which they serve to minimize transportation costs and address future planned residential growth (*2019 GP, Chapter 6, Fiscal Policy, Strategy 1.3, Actions 1.3.I and 1.3.J*). The policies of the 2019 GP also support and encourage the co-location of County facilities when it improves service efficiencies (*2019 GP, Chapter 6, Fiscal Policy, Action 1.3.B*). The proposed elementary school (ES-32) is planned to be utilized for kindergarten through grade 2 in conjunction with future Hovatter Elementary School (ES-29) which is planned for grades 3-5. The School Board has determined the need for an additional elementary school in the Dulles South area to accommodate future students associated with increased residential development.

The location of the proposed school on a County-owned property within the TPA in conjunction with other schools and adjoining an existing residential development within the school area to be served is supported by the land use and location policies of the 2019 GP. The 2019 GP envisions the TPA as an area with a distinct development pattern where open spaces serve as the dominant landscape, protecting natural, environmental, and heritage resources while framing a unique built environment (*2019 GP, Chapter 2, TPA, Introduction, text*). The proposed two-story school has been designed to maximize the use of the acreage on the subject site, and allows for the shared use of existing playing fields which are located away from the adjoining residential uses to the north. The proposed elementary school is screened from the adjoining uses by existing landscape buffers and undeveloped natural areas that comprise the required 50-percent open space on the subject property (*2019 GP, Chapter 2, Transition Large Lot Neighborhood Place Type, Design Characteristics*). The subject property is located on the periphery of the Willowsford residential development with access provided to Braddock Road, which is a collector road and is envisioned to handle higher traffic volumes associated with the school uses on the property (*Countywide Transportation Plan, Appendix A1, Planning Guidelines for Major Roadways Countywide*). The existing onsite road network will provide site access to the proposed elementary school. In general, the proposed elementary school has been designed to minimize its impacts on the subject property, through the incorporation of existing buffers, natural area, utilities, and internal road network.

Community Planning Staff finds the proposed elementary school use is compatible with the existing school uses on the subject property and the surrounding residential uses. The general location, character, and extent of the proposed use on the subject site is in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The land use and public facilities policies of the 2019 GP support the co-location of County facilities such as schools to increase operational efficiency and optimize the use of the land. The use of a portion of the subject property for an additional elementary school is consistent with the land use, environmental and public facilities policies of the 2019 GP. Community Planning Staff finds the general location, character, and extent of the proposed elementary school is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and supports approval of the CMPT.

Cc: Alaina Ray, AICP, Director, Planning and Zoning Department, Via e-mail
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