

December 6, 2018

Town of Leesburg
Department of Plan Review
25 West Market Street
Leesburg, VA 20176

Attention: Mr. William R. Ackman, Jr., P.E.

**Re: School at CS Monroe Property (TLSE-2018-0008)
Request to Modify DCSM Section 7-361.3 & 7-361.5**

Dear Mr. Ackman:

Please consider this request to modify DCSM Section 7-361.3 and 7-361.5 of the *Town of Leesburg Design and Construction Standards Manual*, which is as follows:

"The entrance centerline for commercial entrances entering along the same side of the street shall be spaced a minimum of 200 feet. Under specific circumstances, the Director may modify this minimum dimensional requirement when sufficient justification is provided by the Applicant."

"No entrance onto a street intersecting a street classified as a minor arterial or higher shall be placed closer than 200 feet (PC to PC) from the nearest edge of the right-of-way for the arterial street. Under specific circumstances, the Director may modify this minimum dimensional requirement when sufficient justification is provided by the Applicant."

The Applicant seeks a modification of the entrance spacing requirement between the two existing entrances into the school located along Childrens Center Road and also the distance between the easternmost entrance into the school (school bus) and the intersection of Catoctin Circle.

The Existing Conditions / Constraints include:

1. The distance between the centerline of the two existing entrances is approximately 74' at the right-of-way.
2. The distance between the existing bus entrance and Catoctin Circle is approximately 165'
3. The existing school has been in operation for over 40 years, since 1977.
4. The existing entrances have two separate and distinct purposes/uses for the school and do not connect to one another.

The Applicant proposes that the existing entrances along Childrens Center Road remain where they exist today as part of this Special Exception Application for the new school on this site. This modification is being requested based on the following:

1. These entrances have been utilized since 1977. The changes for the proposed facility include separating car and bus traffic, which is now an LCPS standard. Since 1977 car and bus traffic has been mixed at the existing entrance location. Also, accident data from the Town of Leesburg Police Department shows no accidents have occurred at this driveway entrance over the last 5 years.
2. Sight distance profiles on Sheets 12 & 13 have been provided showing adequate sight distance at the proposed entrance locations.
3. J2 Engineers and LCPS staff independently studied the impact to the proposed building and determined that the first floor elevation (FFE) would need to be raised from 396.80 to either 400.80 or 401.80 respectively. The cost impact

would be between \$760,000 to \$1.02 million in additional site costs (to raise the building as a result of aligning the entrance with Wild Turkey Way).

4. We believe the residents off of Wild Turkey Way would not be supportive of a shared intersection with the school, which would create potential conflicts and accidents at that intersection. It is our position that maintaining the existing entrance with the enhancement of separated car and bus traffic improves the overall flow of traffic in the vicinity of the school.
5. If the driveway is to be aligned with Wild Turkey Way, the building design concepts present with this package will need to be reconsidered including the entire building and floor plan per the architectural consultant and LCPS staff.
 - a) The building and site concepts proposed are anchored around the existing entrance location such that the approach to the building and site circulation is intuitive for users of the facility and visitors. The location of the main entrance to the building is sited based on approach from the existing entrance for clear wayfinding through the site. The current location of the main entrance is also sited to adequately serve and monitor the bus loop location.
 - b) A modified alignment with Wild Turkey Way would force drivers to pass the front of the building to enter the site, confusing driver expectations for those who do not use the facility regularly. It is important for the main entrance to the facility to be clearly marked as there are many visitors (primarily the adult education users, both day and evening) to the site that do not visit on a routing basis.
 - c) Operationally, should the entrance modification to the location at Wild Turkey Way be required, the circulation on the property does not work effectively without redesigning the building and site. We estimate that 30+/- parking spaces would be lost in order to effectively redesign the site entrance sequence and that only one way in and out to the front door could be provided. The building floor plan including entrance location would also need to be redesigned to reorient the building and the entire program to adjust the site entrance location.
 - d) Equally significant, raising the finished floor elevation of the new building would create a non-desirable impact for the adjacent residential homes at Fox Ridge. The approximate 5' in additional building height, from that vantage point, will create the appearance of a much larger building footprint overall. The current conceptual design has been sensitive to the nearby residences to minimize this potential impact and maintains the proposed finished floor elevation within a foot of the existing floor elevation.
 - e) The modified finished floor elevation would be approximately 9'-10' below the (relocated) driveway entrance, creating an undesirable visual impact upon approach to the building from Catoctin Circle. To adequately manage the grade change at the entrance, retaining walls would be required, which to design with aesthetic sensitivity, will add cost to the project. Further, to enter the site notably higher than the finished floor elevation of the building creates an undesirable overall aesthetic, additional site design considerations including managing the grade changes relative to parking and circulation design and impacts to overall site circulation.
6. Keeping the driveway entrances where they exist today provides immediate front door access for visitors and operates more naturally for drivers.

We trust that this justifies the request to modify DCSM 7-361.3 & 7-361.5 and reduce the existing intersection spacing between the two entrances and to reduce the distance between the existing easternmost entrance and Catoctin Circle. Should you have any questions or need and regarding this request, please feel free to contact me at (703) 361-1550 ext. 210.

Sincerely,
J2 Engineers, Inc.


Gustavo Bravo
Senior Associate

