GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Office of the Director

Office of Intermodal Planning

***Memorandum***

'00 MAY 22 P5:08
OFFICE OF ZONING
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**To:** Andrew Altman
Director
**Office of Planning**

**From:** **Kenneth Laden**
**Administrator**

**Date:** May 22, 2000

**Subject:** BZA Application No. 16559 – The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritiz Foundation requesting special exception to establish a private school for a maximum of 320 students and a maximum of 74 faculty and staff in the R-1-A District at premises 2301 Foxhall Road, N.W. (Square 1341, Lots 856,861,878 and 879).

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has conducted further examinations of the revised traffic plan for the proposed Field School at 2301 Foxhall Road N.W. We have also reviewed the comments provided by the Transportation Research Corporation on behalf of Neighbors Against Gridlock. This report will also summarize our findings resulting from field investigations at the site conducted on May 18, 2000 by DPW staff.

The proposed site presents a potential traffic safety problem due to restricted sight lines, drivers traveling at excessive speeds, and high traffic volumes. However, we believe the Field School could be accommodated at the site if certain conditions are met.

The following is our response to comments on the proposed access requirements to and from the proposed Field School site.

1. The Department agrees that the appropriate design speed for the investigations related to the proposed left turn lane is 40 MPH.

2. We concur that the appropriate sight distance for the southbound traffic on Foxhall Road to identify the left turn lane and take appropriate action is 364 feet. Given the



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urban nature of the roadway, we believe that an approach taper of 320 feet is appropriate and the left turn bay taper with a minimum of 88 feet can be used since this is a painted channelization.

3. We believe that a proposed vehicular stacking length of 66 feet is adequate for three cars, which we believe satisfactory for the proposed left turn lane.

4. We recommend that a deceleration distance within the left turn lane be 315 feet.

**Recommendation:**
The Department recommends that a proposed left turn lane be constructed at the proposed southern entrance to the site, provided that the following minimum design features are met:

- a taper of 320 feet and combined stacking, turn bay taper, and deceleration distance of 474 feet to safely allow southbound traffic on Foxhall Road to enter the proposed school site; and

- the left turn lane should be designed to allow for a sight distance of 364 feet for southbound traffic on Foxhall Road to the beginning of the taper, and a sight distance of 305 feet for northbound traffic to the intersection of the proposed left turn lane and the proposed driveway.

The Department would require that any approval of the proposed application be conditioned upon the Department's review and approval of the final detail design plans for the left turn lane. All design and construction costs must be the responsibility of the Field School.

5. Sight distances from the northern exit from the proposed site to make either a left or right turn must be 447 feet, assuming a speed of 40 MPH on Foxhall Road. The existing north entrance provides a sight distance of approximately 340 feet from a northbound direction, and 350 feet from a southbound direction. Therefore, we do not believe that traffic should be allowed to exit from this portion of the property onto Foxhall Road. We would require that this exit be eliminated from the site plan.

6. As a further condition to allowing this property to be used as the new site for the Field School, existing utility poles must be removed and the utilities placed underground to remove barriers to sight distances. Existing street lights would also need to be relocated to remove visual obstruction and to provide room for the widening of Foxhall Road. The Kreeger Museum fences or vegetation would no longer be an issue regarding sight distances at the northern entrance to the site since we recommend that this entrance not be used.

7. The required sight distance from the proposed relocated southern entrance must be 445 feet to allow safe turning onto Foxhall in a north or southbound direction,

assuming a speed of 40 MPH on Foxhall Road. Current sight distances are 400 feet northbound (right turn) and 390 feet southbound (left turn).

**Recommendation**

Since we do not believe sight distances are adequate, the Department would require, as a condition of approval, that a traffic signal be located at the proposed southern exit of the school site to stop traffic on Foxhall Road to allow safe turns into and out of the proposed school property. The proposed traffic control signal should provide a priority green light to traffic on Foxhall Road, and only be activated to stop traffic on Foxhall Road when there are vehicles stacked in the proposed left turn lane, or a car is in the proposed southern entrance/exit waiting to enter Foxhall Road. We further recommend that both left and right turns be allowed from this proposed southern exit. Finally, the Department would require that school zone warning signs and signs warning drivers on Foxhall Road of the traffic signal at the entrance to the school be placed on Foxhall Road. All improvements related to the traffic control signal and signage must be provided at the expense of the Field School.

8. Traffic congestion (level of service) on Foxhall Road is measured at intersections, not on segments of roadway. The Department concurs with the level of service findings provided in the Gorove Slade traffic study dated February 29, 2000 (Table 1). The level of service at Foxhall Road and Garfield Street is 'C' during the morning peak traffic period and 'B' during the evening peak traffic period. This denotes moderate to light traffic congestion during peak traffic hours. The level of service at Foxhall Road and 'W' Street and Foxhall Road and Whitehaven Parkway are at level of service 'A' during both morning and evening peak hours. This denotes very light traffic congestion. Average daily traffic on this section of Foxhall Road is approximately 17,500 vehicles per day according to the most recent 1997 traffic counts.

   Significant problems exist with traffic on 'W' Street attempting to enter Foxhall Road during the morning and evening peak traffic period. The Department previously proposed placing a traffic control signal at this location, however, some local residents have opposed this recommendation. At this time, the Department has withdrawn the recommendation to place a traffic control signal at this site. The recommendation to place a traffic control signal at the proposed southern entrance to the Field School site may provide some breaks in traffic on Foxhall which may improve turning opportunities from 'W' Street.

9. The Department surveyed adjacent streets to assess the advisability of using these streets as an alternative approach to allowing left turns into or out of the proposed Field School property. The Department found the recommended streets to be primarily residential streets with on-street parking which restricted free-flowing traffic movement. The Department does not support the use of any right turn only policy which would require school related traffic to weave through adjacent residential streets to access or leave the school.

10. The Department does not have adequate staff to prepare neighborhood traffic studies. We are in the process of hiring traffic consultants to prepare neighborhood traffic studies in the future. We are also developing a city-wide traffic calming policy. The Department would not be able to assess the traffic calming needs of the Foxhall Road community until some time in 2001.

**Conclusion**

The Department is extremely concerned about traffic safety along Foxhall Road given the volume of traffic and speed of traffic along this segment of a relatively winding and hilly roadway. We are also concerned that some of the drivers who will be travelling to the school will be relatively young and inexperienced drivers. We are therefore applying extremely conservative engineering requirements and traffic control policies in developing our recommendations regarding the traffic impacts of this proposed application.

1. As stated in our previous testimony, the Department supports the carpooling and transit recommendations as presented in the Field School traffic management plan.

2. The Department does not support the placement of a traffic control officer at the Foxhall Road entrance to the school.

3. As a condition of approval, the Department recommends that utilities and other visual obstructions must be removed and relocated at the expense of the Field School.

4. As a condition of approval, the Department recommends the widening of Foxhall Road adjacent to the Field School property to allow the development of a southbound left turn lane on Foxhall Road into the proposed Field School site. The road widening and construction of the left turn lane on Foxhall Road must provide a sight distance of 305 feet for northbound traffic and 364 feet for southbound traffic. The length of the combined taper, deceleration and stacking distance must be a minimum of 474 feet. The Department would require that any approval of this application be conditioned upon the Field School meeting these minimum design criteria. All design and construction costs associated with the widening and construction of the left turn lane must be the responsibility of the Field School.

5. The Department would require as a condition of approval that the northern exit from the Field School site be eliminated to prohibit any turns from Foxhall Road into the school site or from the school onto Foxhall Road. All north and southbound traffic leaving the proposed school site would need to exit the site from the proposed southern entrance/exit.

6. The Department would require as a condition of approval that a traffic signal be located at the proposed southern exit of the school site to stop traffic on Foxhall Road to allow safe turns into and out of the proposed school property. The proposed traffic control signal should provide a priority green light to traffic on Foxhall Road, and only be activated to stop northbound traffic on Foxhall Road when there are vehicles

stacked in the proposed left turn lane. The traffic control signal would stop north and southbound traffic when a car is in the proposed southern entrance/exit waiting to enter Foxhall Road. We further recommend that both left and right turns be allowed from this proposed southern exit. Finally, the Department would require that school zone warning signs and signs warning drivers on Foxhall Road of the traffic signal at the entrance to the school be placed on Foxhall Road. All improvements related to the traffic control signal and signage must be provided at the expense of the Field School.

7. The Department does not support the use of any right turn only policy which would require school related traffic to weave through adjacent residential streets to access or leave the school.