

BZA Case No. 21345
Whittier Elementary Modular Campus

3rd St. NW

(Square 3269, Lot 0065)

Presenter: Meridith Moldenhauer of Cozen O' Connor

Members of the Team Present for Questions

Ronnie McGhee

Principal at R. McGhee & Associates



Alex Casey

Project Manager at DGS

Mar'Vic Davis

Assistant Project Manager at DGS

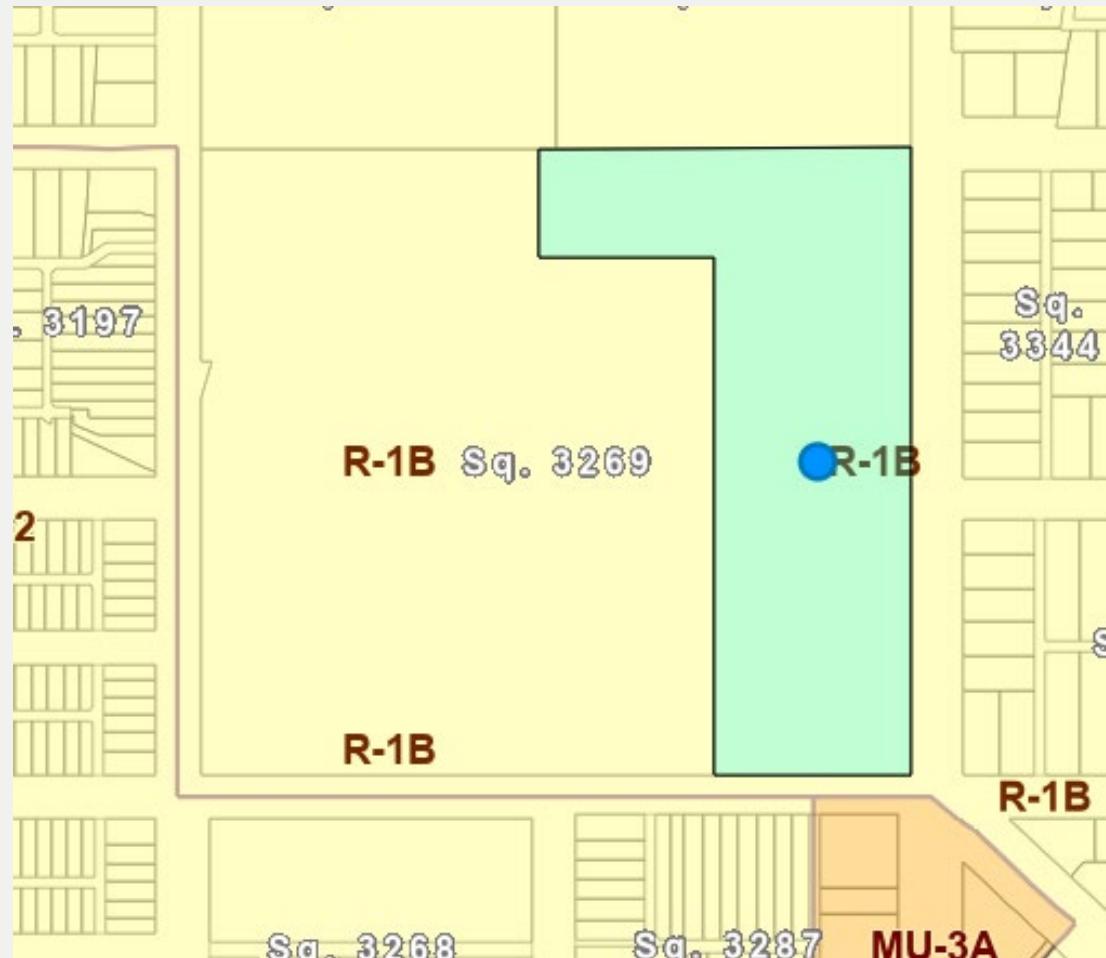


Michelle Sterling

Project Coordinator at DCPS



Zoning Map – R-1B Zone



Existing Conditions-Vicinity Map

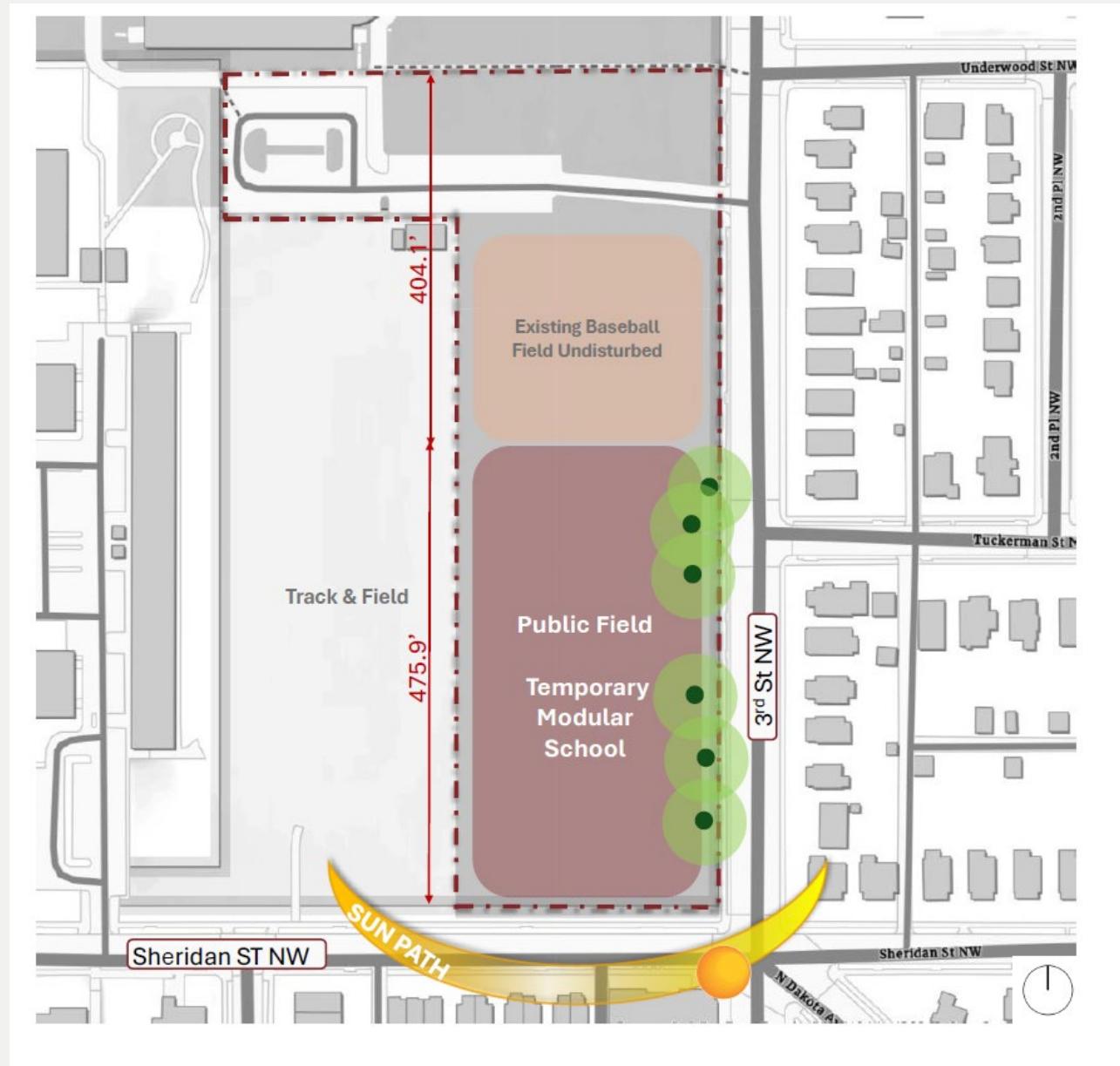
- 1 WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 2 IDA B WELLS MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 3 COOLIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
- 4 TAKOMA PARK COMMUNITY/RECREATION CENTER
- 5 TAKOMA PARK AQUATIC CENTER
- 6 ATHLETIC TRACK
- 7 PUBLIC FIELD/PROPOSED SITE
- 8 TAKOMA PLAYGROUND
- 9 MONACAN PARK



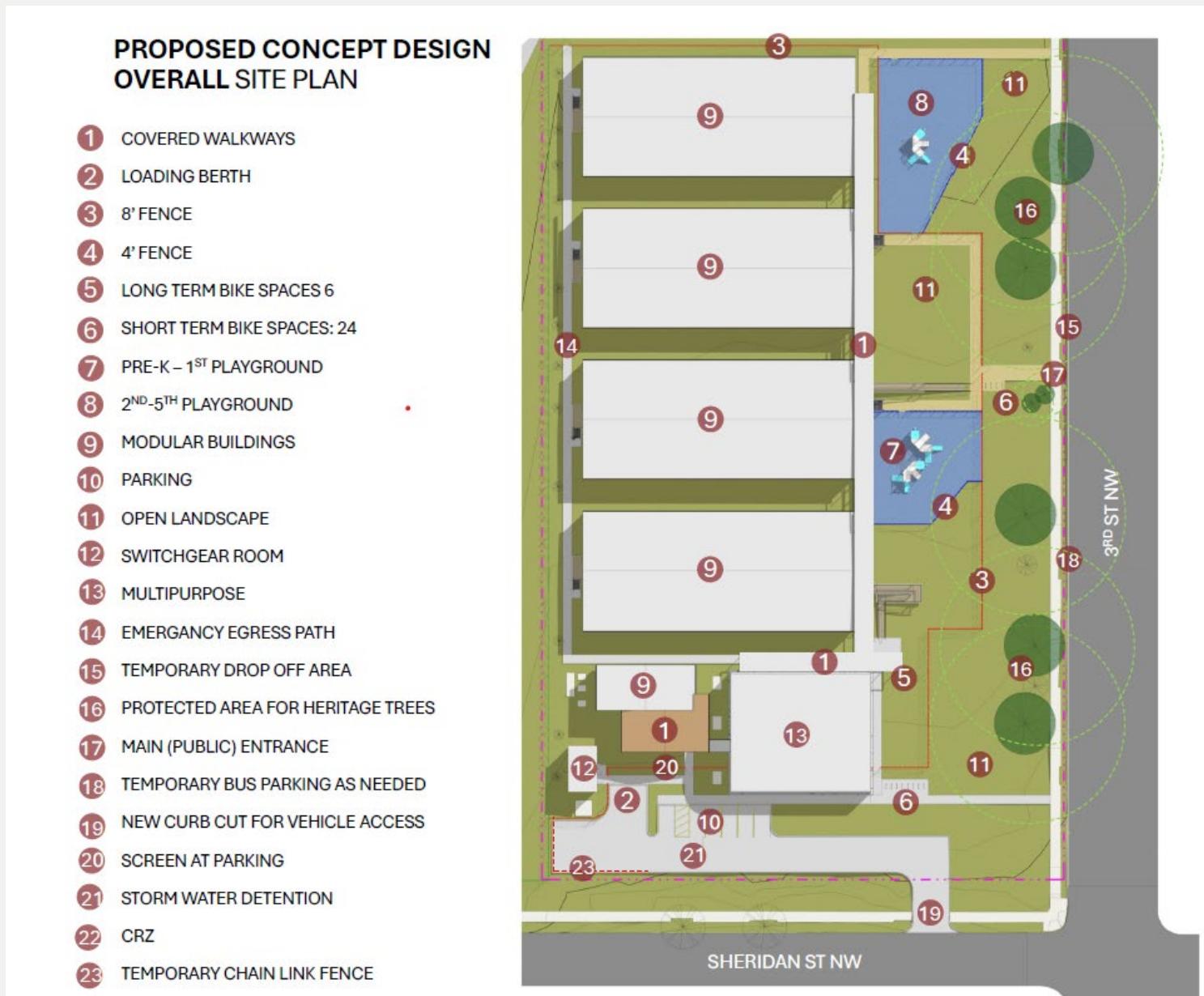
Existing Conditions



Proposed Siting of Modular Campus



Swing Space Site Plan



Swing Space Details

The Modular Swing Space Campus will include

- Academic Spaces
- Administrative Spaces
- Building Support
- A Health Suite
- Library
- Performance and Visual Arts Spaces
- Kitchen
- Multipurpose Space
- ADA Accessible Bathroom

Community Outreach

DGS and DCPS have conducted ongoing engagement with families, staff, and neighbors throughout the design and zoning process:

- Since April 1, 2025, the project team has held or attended 4 community meetings, including three School Improvement Team (SIT) sessions.
- On June 23, 2025 the Applicant presented the application to ANC 4B, who voted unanimously in support. The Resolution has been filed in the record at Ex 15.

Relief Requested

The Applicant requests area variance relief from 11-C DCMR § 302.2, which prohibits more than one principal structure on a single record lot in residential zones.

- The Subject Property will temporarily include a modular swing space composed of multiple detached buildings.
- The swing space is necessary to house students during the school modernization and will consist of four academic/administrative trailers, one kitchen trailer, and a multipurpose “bubble” structure.
- Each modular trailer qualifies as a separate primary building, triggering the need for relief.

BZA Relief Requested-Variance Standard

Pursuant to 11-X DCMR § 1002.1 the Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant area variance relief where the applicant demonstrates that:

- The property is affected by an extraordinary or exceptional situation or condition;
- The strict application of the zoning regulations would result in a practical difficulty to the applicant; and
- The relief can be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent, purpose, and integrity of the zoning regulations and map.

BZA Relief Requested-Exceptional Condition

The Property is affected by a confluence of conditions that qualify as exceptional:

- The Project requires modular construction due to cost, speed, and the need for reversibility.
- Modular trailers are limited in width and must remain detached to comply with fire separation and transport limits.
- The Property is uniquely suited for multiple primary structures due to its exceptional size, especially in contrast to the predominantly small residential lots that characterize the surrounding neighborhood.

BZA Relief Requested-Practical Difficulty

Strict compliance with the regulation's requirements would ultimately undermine the efficiency and affordability of modular construction, defeating its intended purpose :

- Modular units must be constructed within transportable dimensions, making consolidation into a single structure impractical.
- Connecting the units on-site would require enclosing the connections, which would significantly increase construction complexity and cost by triggering additional mechanical, fire safety, and accessibility requirements.

BZA Relief Requested-No Harm

The variance relief will not cause substantial detriment to the public good or Zoning Regulations

- The site will operate as a public elementary school, a matter-of-right use in the R-1-B zone.
- The swing space is temporary.
- All zoning standards for height, lot occupancy, FAR, parking, and bicycle parking are met.
- The Project preserves open space, playgrounds, and neighborhood character.

Questions?