

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission Members
From: Development Department
CC: Honorable Members of City Council, Clerk of Council, City Departments
Date: August 1, 2014
Re: Staff Report for Richard Avenue Elementary School – Development Plan

Item #4 – Richard Avenue Elementary School - Development Plan
(PID #201406300028)

Application: Development Plan
Location: 3646 Richard Avenue
Applicant: Mark Waller, South-Western City School District
Zoning: SD-1
Use: School

Relevant Code Section(s):

- 1135.12 Zoning Districts and Regulations – Non-Residential District Requirements
- 1136.05 Landscaping – Minimum Landscape Requirements
- 1136.09 Landscaping – Other Planting Requirements

Project Summary:

The applicant is proposing to construct a new facility for Richard Avenue Elementary School located at 3646 Richard Avenue. The proposed structure will be approximately 61,000 square feet and offer more than 21,000 square feet of classroom space. The existing school structure on the site will be demolished in order to construct the proposed new structure.

Site Plan

The 8.9 acre site will be accessed from two curb-cuts on Richard Avenue. The northern cut will be designated for school buses and provide access to event parking within the hard-play and bus drop off area. The southern cut will access the visitor and staff parking areas as well as the drop-off drive along the front of the building. The northern cut will be located across from Thomas Avenue and the southern cut will be across from Barbee Avenue.

Soft play areas are proposed to the west and east of the northern classroom portion of the building and the hard play area will be east of the structure. Dry detention basins are proposed in the northern portion of the property and east of the hard play / bus drop off area. The stream protection zone along the north property line is not being disturbed with the proposed redevelopment. Other nearby structures including the baseball diamond and gazebo will remain as-is.

Although not shown on plans, staff has discussed with the school district the desire to install a recreational trail south of the parking lot to connect to the existing trail system around the Big Splash. The school district has stated in a letter to staff that it would be willing to work with the city to develop an easement for the installation of the trail, which would be maintained by the city.

The service area, including mechanical yard and dumpster, is proposed on the south side of the structure, to be screened on the west and east sides with masonry screen walls. Views from the residential areas to the south will be screened by landscaping along the south property line.

Building

The proposed new structure is 61,572 square feet with 21,840 square feet of classroom space. The structure will be two stories in height finished in brick ("Commodore" and "Dutch Gray") with a metal roof (Beige). The maximum height of the structure is 40'2", exceeding the permitted 35' in an SD-1 district. A variance has not been obtained for this structure to exceed the permitted height; however staff would support a deviation to the height requirement, given that the three other elementary schools recently redeveloped or proposed for redevelopment were granted height variances for their new buildings.

Masonry screen walls are proposed around the dumpster and service area on the south side of the building. The applicant has submitted materials showing the visibility of certain rooftop mechanicals including the kitchen intake and exhaust equipment. According to materials, these items will be visible above the parapet from the east property line; however they will be painted to match the brick utilized on the structure.

Parking

The proposed new school site will contain 117 parking spaces, including six handicap accessible spaces. Parking for seven school buses is shown in the rear bus drop off area. Although the proposed parking is below the 146 spaces required by Code based on the proposed classroom square footage, staff feels that this is appropriate for the site, given the proximity of Brookpark Middle School with the sidewalk connecting the two sites for overflow event parking. The parking lot at the existing Richard Avenue site contains 89 spaces.

Signage

Because the property is located in an SD-1 district, all proposed signage will be reviewed and approved by the Building Division through the sign permit process.

Recommendation(s):

Staff has reviewed the enclosed plans and supports the following deviations from the Codified Ordinances:

1. Parking lot landscape end islands removed from rear event parking / bus drop-off area.
2. Total parking on the site reduced from 146 to 117 spaces.
3. Total building height of 40'2" exceeds Code maximum 35' by 5'2".

After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of approval to City Council for the Development Plan as submitted.