



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

### County Board Agenda Item Meeting of July 15, 2017

**DATE:** July 7, 2017

**SUBJECT:** U-3492-17-1 USE PERMIT for Gunston Middle School and interior modifications to increase design capacity; located at 2700 S. Lang St (RPC# 38-001-001).

**Applicant:**

Arlington County School Board

**By:**

John Chadwick  
Assistant Superintendent, Facilities and Operation  
Arlington Public Schools  
1426 North Quincy Street  
Arlington, VA 22207

**C.M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the use permit for Gunston Middle School and interior modifications to create two (2) new classrooms for increased design capacity up to 1,046, subject to conditions of the staff report.

**ISSUES:** This is a use permit request by Arlington Public Schools for Gunston Middle School with an increase in design capacity via interior modifications to create two (2) new classrooms to accommodate increases in student enrollment. No issues have been identified.

**SUMMARY:** Arlington Public Schools (APS) is proposing, as part of the School Board's adopted FY 2017 – 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), to make interior modifications to increase the design capacity of Gunston Middle School in order to accommodate increasing student enrollment. APS has proposed to create two (2) new classrooms to increase the existing main building design capacity by 72 students, from 932 to 1,004. There are also currently two (2) relocatables at the site that accommodate 42 seats; there are no changes proposed with respect to

County Manager:

County Attorney:

CR Sanders

Staff: Cedric Southerland, DCPHD, Planning Division

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the trailers. Gunston Middle School has shared space with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The interior modifications will include part of DPR's office space and multipurpose room to create the two (2) classrooms. Currently, APS and DPR share the three (3) existing classrooms in this area of the school, and will share the new classrooms. The proposed interior modifications are not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood. No issues have been identified with the proposed use permit. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board approve the use permit subject to the conditions of the staff report.

**BACKGROUND:** Gunston Middle School moved to its current site in 1959, and operated until 1978 when it was closed due to declining enrollment. The school reopened in 1994 to relieve overcrowding in nearby schools. Renovations to the school soon followed with the addition of a new library in 1995, and a new, two-story classroom wing in the fall of 1996. Subsequent construction was undertaken in 2000 to renovate the auxiliary gym and locker rooms. In 2001, construction began on a new classroom wing, two theaters, classrooms for sixth and seventh grades, the main gym, and the cafeteria, with all work being completed in 2003 and total design capacity of 974 including two relocatables.

**The following provides additional information about the site and location):**

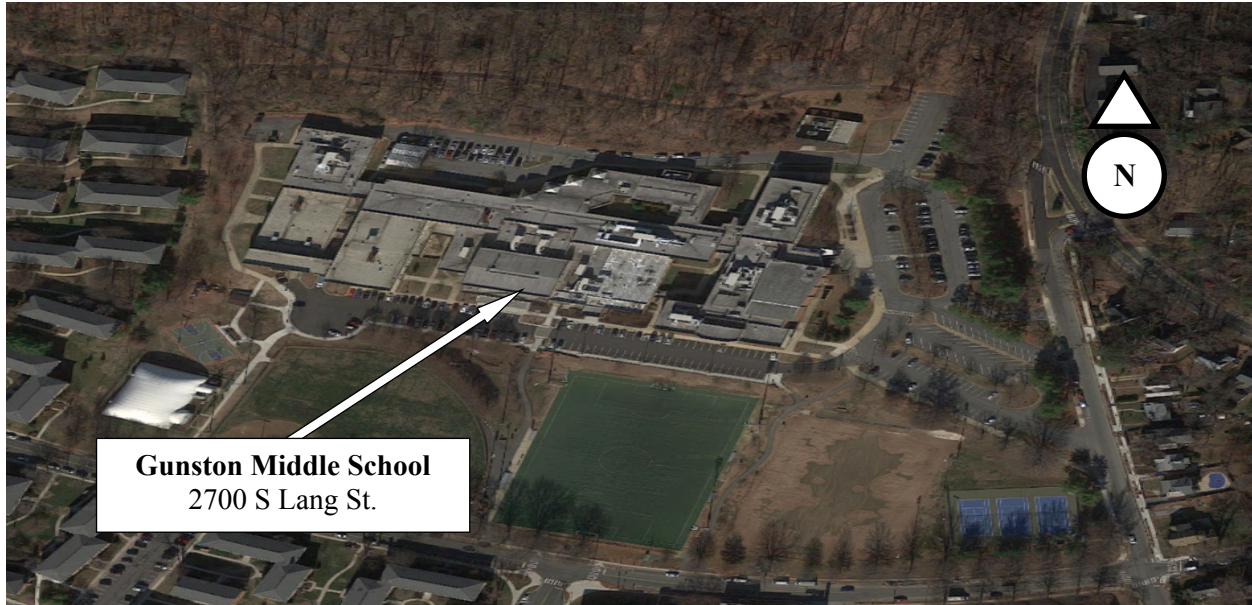
Site: The site is approximately 20 acres developed with the existing Gunston Middle School, bounded on the east by single-family residential on S. Lang Street, on the south by single-family residential on 28th Street S., on the west by multi-family townhomes and on the north by Oakridge Elementary School and James W. Haley Park. The entire site also includes ball fields and courts operated by DPR, and contains an existing 974-student middle school, a 410 seat theater and 125 seat theater with a rehearsal room, a dance studio, set and costume construction shops; community center on site with meeting rooms, a multipurpose room, a game room, a gymnasium, and a fitness room; Softball/Baseball Diamond, Rectangular Fields (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse/Rugby), Tennis Courts, Basketball/Volleyball Courts, the Gunston Bubble, an indoor turf field; and 306 parking spaces as well as 30 bicycle spaces.

Zoning: The site is zoned ["S-3A" Special Districts](#).

Land Use: The site is identified as "Public" on the [General Land Use Plan \(GLUP\)](#).

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Long Branch Creek Civic Association. APS conducted outreach to the civic association about the project. APS and DPR held a joint public meeting to explain the reconfiguration of space on May 10, 2017. There were four (4) attendees and no comments provided. Staff followed up with the civic association and they have stated that they have no objection to the proposed use permit.

**Figure 1 Gunston Middle School**



Source: Google Maps

**DISCUSSION:** APS is proposing to make interior modifications to increase design capacity of the existing Gunston Middle School. The modifications will add two classrooms and increase the existing school's main building design capacity by 72 students, from 932 to 1,004. The addition will take a portion of the DPR space. APS and DPR already have an agreement to share the existing three (3) classrooms in that area of the school. APS and DPR have held a joint public meeting to explain the reconfiguration of the shared space. The capacity is as follows:

*Table 1: Capacity*

Existing Building Capacity	932
Existing Relocatable Capacity	42
Total	974
Proposed Building Capacity	1004
Proposed Relocatable Capacity	42
Total	1046
<b>Increase in Overall Capacity</b>	<b>72</b>

**Parking:** There are 306 total existing on-site parking spaces at Gunston Middle School which exceeds the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance (ACZO) requirement of 167 spaces. The table below shows the parking requirements and calculations.

*Table 2: Parking*

Existing Staff (1 Space per 7.5 Capacity)	140
Existing Visitor (1 Space per 40 Capacity)	27
Total Existing Required	167
Proposed Staff (1 Space per 7.5 Capacity)	150
Proposed Visitor (1 Space per 40 Capacity)	29
Total Required without Parking Modification	179
<b>Total Existing On-Site Parking</b>	<b>306</b>

*Student Bicycle Parking:* Gunston Middle School has bicycle parking for 30 bikes currently. No additional bicycle parking is needed or required.

*Transportation Demand Management (TDM):* A TDM plan is not required for this use permit, as the proposal meets the ACZO parking requirements.

*Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:* Per Virginia Code 15.2-2232, public facilities shall not be constructed unless they are found to be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof. The General Land Use Plan (GLUP), an element of Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan designates the subject site as "Public." This designation allows for parks (local, regional and federal), schools (public), parkways, major unpaved rights-of-way, libraries and cultural facilities. Staff determined that the public facilities proposed are consistent with Arlington's Comprehensive Plan, and at its July 5, 2017 meeting, the Planning Commission confirmed the recommended finding that the public facilities are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The entire Planning Commission recommendation and votes are outlined in the Planning Commission letter dated July 12, 2017. Gunston Middle School, constructed in 1959, pre-dates the initial adoption of the Comprehensive and General Land Use Plan in 1961.

**CONCLUSION:** APS must provide enough classroom seats to meet student demand, and is requesting a use permit to make the necessary modifications to increase the design capacity of Gunston Middle School. The interior modifications to increase capacity by adding two classrooms is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the community. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board approve the use permit for the existing Gunston Middle School and interior modifications to increase school capacity, subject to the conditions of the report.

Proposed Conditions (Gunston Middle School):

1. The applicant agrees that the school located on the property at 2700 S. Lang Street will remain as shown on the plans dated May 11, 2017 (plans entitled “Gunston Middle School Renovation”). The applicant agrees that minor changes to the site shall be approved by the County Manager or his designee if the County Manager finds that the changes are not inconsistent with the approval of this use permit.
2. The applicant agrees to comply with all requirements set forth in all applicable ordinance and regulations, including, by way of illustration and not limitation, those administered by the Zoning Office, Code Enforcement Office, Inspection Services Division, Fire Marshal’s Office, and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

**PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:**

June 28, 1941	Denied request to rezone from Residential “A” to Residential “B” (Z-215-41-1).
May 18, 1954	Denied request to rezone from R-6, RA-R, and R-10 to RA8-18 (Z-1149-54-2).
February 3, 1966	Approved rezoning from R-6, RA-R, and R-10 to S-3A (Z-1846-66-1).



