



**McLean Citizens Association Resolution  
2232 Review FS-D14-53  
Mt Daniel Elementary School Expansion  
2328 North Oak Street  
Tax Maps 40-4 ((1)) 22, ((15)) A, ((19)) (A) 41  
June 3, 2015**

**Whereas**, Falls Church City Public Schools (FCCPS) operates Mt Daniel Elementary (Mt Daniel) school on a 7.31-acre property located in a residential neighborhood at 2328 North Oak Street in the R-4 residential district, and

**Whereas**, FCCPS has operated an elementary school on this property since 1952, and expanded the school by 4 classrooms in 2005; and

**Whereas**, the subject property is currently developed with a 1-story elementary school comprising 15 classrooms, and 2 trailers providing an additional 3 classrooms; and

**Whereas**, Mt Daniel has a current enrollment of approximately 436 kindergarten and first grade students, and 50 employees; and

**Whereas**, the Virginia Department of Education School Inventory cites Mt Daniel's current capacity as 370 students; and

**Whereas**, FCCPS is proposing to expand Mt Daniel to 36 classrooms with an enrollment of 792 students, and 84 employees; and

**Whereas**, as part of the expansion, FCCPS would repurpose Mt Daniel by adding 2<sup>nd</sup> grade education relocated from Thomas Jefferson Elementary school; and

**Whereas**, the expansion would include a community use gymnasium which would be utilized after school and evenings; and

**Whereas**, the number of parking spaces would be increased from 64 spaces to 110; and

**Whereas**, up until 1972, Mt Daniel had frontage on the existing North Oak Street and on the approved right-of-way for Greenwich Street that connected to Walnut Street; and

**Whereas**, the City of Falls Church had constructed a parking lot and playground on the Greenwich Street right-of-way, then successfully petitioned the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to vacate that right-of-way, so that Greenwich Street would no longer connect to the school; and

**Whereas**, Mt Daniel lies at the terminus of North Oak Street which serves as the school's sole vehicular ingress/egress, and this limited access is self-imposed; and

**Whereas**, the Virginia Department of Transportation's geometric design standards for a school bus access road requires 24 feet of pavement, plus 8 additional feet for each parking lane; and

**Whereas**, the segment of North Oak Street leading to the school is less than 26 feet wide, with parking lanes on both sides, and constitutes a yield street, meaning at times there is insufficient space for two cars to pass each other and, therefore, one car must move to the side to yield to the other; and

**Whereas**, half of the homes on North Oak Street, situated north of Walnut Street and constructed mostly in the 1940's, have narrow driveways that will not accommodate 2 cars side-by-side, and thusly the property owners are reliant on on-street parking; and

**Whereas**, lot widths of 80 feet further limit the amount of available space for on-street parking without encroaching on driveway openings; and

**Whereas**, the existing impacts of the school are such that FCCPS implemented parking and traffic mitigation measures where FCCPS blocks off Walnut Street and North Oak Street for special events in the evening and only allows local traffic to pass; and

**Whereas**, on May 19, 2015, the Falls Church City (City) School Board adopted a resolution titled, "*Commitment to Maintain Traffic Calming Efforts In and Around the Mt Daniel School*" that resolves to:

- 1) Continue long-term efforts to reduce parking and traffic congestion around Mt Daniel,
- 2) Close the City portion of N. Oak Street to local traffic only and shuttling staff and community to the school for large events,
- 3) Be mindful of scheduling activities during the day which could result in parking difficulties and work to reduce the number of cars at one time; and

**Whereas**, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), commenting on the traffic impacts of the proposed expansion, did not anticipate any neighborhood impacts from the drop off queue and opined that the intersection of North West Street and North Oak Street would continue to operate at adequate capacity; and

**Whereas**, FCDOT's comments further advised:

- 1) The staged arrivals and departures of buses should be enforced and monitored,
- 2) Monitoring the level of service and accessibility of the intersection of North West Street and North Oak Street would be the City's responsibility,
- 3) With the increase in students and teachers at Mt Daniel, the need to yield to vehicles passing in the opposite direction on North Oak Street will increase,
- 4) Conditions on North Oak Street should be monitored as the school expands,
- 5) The school's program for shuttling attendees to school functions should be monitored,
- 6) The school should ensure that special event parking does not impact the residents' ability to park on North Oak Street, and

**Whereas**, there is no legal mechanism to set conditions on the approval of a 2232 Review that would mitigate impacts on the neighborhood or require such monitoring, and the mitigation efforts put forth in the FCCPS resolution are strictly voluntary and lack lawful compulsion; and

**Whereas**, shuttling staff and community by bus to large school events in perpetuity would be burdensome and anathema to operating a public facility, and its very suggestion would substantiate the poor accessibility and that the extent of the proposed expansion is not appropriate for this site; and

**Whereas**, a doubling of the school enrollment would greatly increase the intensity of use and traffic and parking impacts on the neighborhood; and

**Whereas**, the Policy Plan element of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan recommends that accessibility be a criterion when locating public facilities, except for a facility with a community pedestrian orientation such as a public school; and

**Whereas**, given its location outside the City, Mt Daniel does not have a pedestrian orientation; students are either bused or driven to school and, moreover, the school discourages walking; and

**Whereas**, the Policy Plan offers further guidance on character and extent, namely, that the facility be appropriately sized and achieves neighborhood compatibility; and

**Whereas**, while the Ellison Heights/Mt Daniel Civic Association has not yet taken a position on the proposed expansion, a survey conducted in May showed 59% opposed it outright, 12.5 % supported the expansion and 28% expressed support with reservation; and

**Whereas**, the extent of the Mt Daniel expansion would be excessive and incompatible with the neighborhood;

**Now, therefore, be it resolved** that the McLean Citizens Association opposes the proposed expansion of Mt Daniel Elementary School and recommends denial of the 2232 application.

*Approved by the MCA Board of Directors  
June 3, 2015*

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McLean Citizens Association, PO Box 273, McLean, Virginia 22101

cc: John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor  
John Ulfelder, Dranesville District Planning Commissioner  
Benjamin Wiles, Staff  
Fairfax County Planning Commission  
Falls Church City Public Schools