



Staff Report to the Plan Commission

Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion

Prepared: 4/29/2025

Project: 2024-0807 Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion

Petitioner: Dr. Daniel Callaghan, Superintendent, Kirby School District 140

Project Representative: Thomas Szurgot, TRIA Architecture

Location: 16600 88th Avenue, Orland Park

P.I.N.s: 27-22-403-011-0000, 27-22-403-012-0000

Parcel Size: 10 acres (9.47 after right-of-way dedication)

Requested Action: The petitioner is seeking approval of a Special Use Permit to continue operating an elementary school at 16600 S 88th Avenue. The request also includes approval of the revised Site Plan, Landscape Plan, and Building Elevations, along with a modification to reduce the required plantings within the southern landscape corridor of the site.

BACKGROUND

Fernway Park Elementary School is an existing facility within Kirby School District 140. The school, as currently developed, has not previously undergone a full compliance review under the Village's Land Development Code (LDC). However, following the *2015 Gurba v. Community High School District No. 155* court ruling, which established that development on school properties is subject to local municipal zoning ordinances, a Special Use Permit is now required for the proposed expansion. The Special Use Permit will allow for the continued operation of the elementary school within the R-2A Residential District.

A Development Petition for a demolition and re-build of Fernway Park Elementary School was submitted in 2022 and received recommendations for approval from both the Plan Commission and the Committee of the Whole (Case No. 2022-0853). However, the case did not proceed to the Board of Trustees for final Ordinance approval, as the petitioner terminated the project.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Village's Comprehensive Plan identifies the site as part of the Fernway Planning District, which is a narrow segment of Orland Park bordered by Orland Hills to the west and Tinley Park to the east and south. The Plan highlights the importance of improving access for non-motorists and emphasizes the need to enhance safe access around schools and parks within the district.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Planning District	Fernway Planning District
Planning Land Use Designation	Community and Institutional

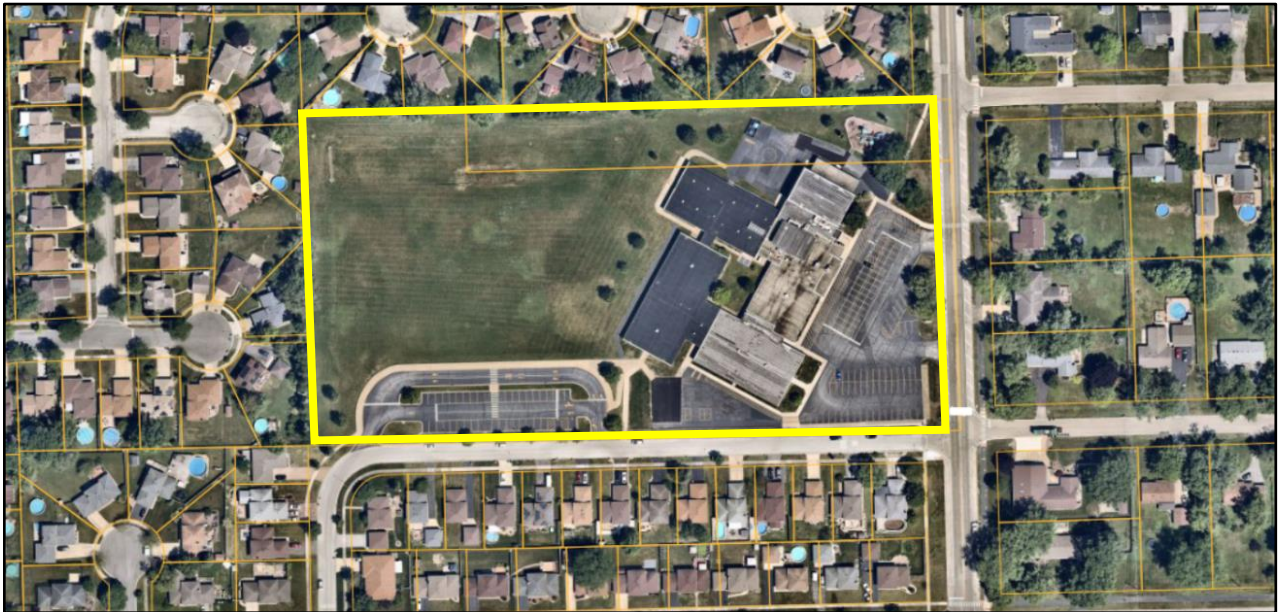
ZONING DISTRICT

Existing	R-2A Residential
----------	------------------

ADJACENT PROPERTIES

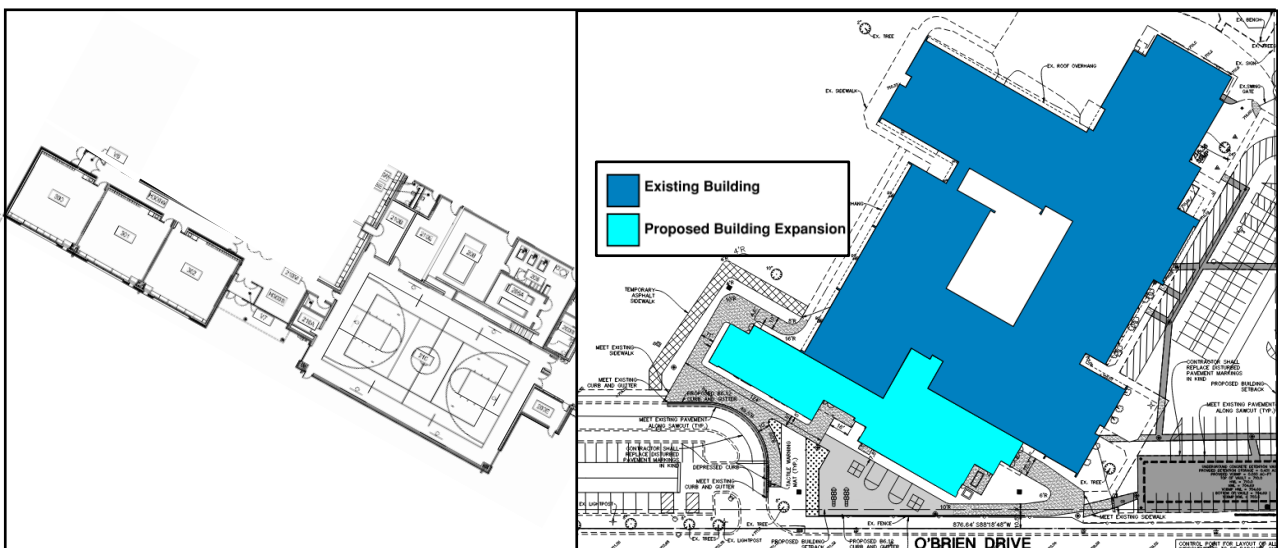
	Zoning District	Land Use
North	R-3 Residential (Orland Hills)	Single-Family Residential (Parkview Homes)
East	R-2A Residential (Orland Park)	Single-Family Residential (Fernway Unit 3)
South	R-3 Residential (Orland Hills)	Single-Family Residential (Green Acres V)
West	R-3 Residential (Orland Hills)	Single-Family Residential (Parkview Homes)

MAP OF SURROUNDING CONTEXT



SITE PLAN

The proposed expansion extends the building south to accommodate a new gymnasium, allowing the gym and the existing lunchroom to function as separate spaces. The expansion also includes three additional classrooms, one office, and mechanical rooms. The main school building and parking areas are located along 88th Avenue, and the bus drive is accessed from O'Brien Drive. The access points will remain unchanged, except for the improvements to pedestrian and bicycle accessibility on site.



Lot Coverage

The site plan increases the total impervious surface of the property up to approximately 4.02 acres, or 42.45%. Much of the area near the proposed gymnasium is existing impervious playground area. Non-residential land uses located in the R-2A Residential District are allowed up to 70% impervious lot coverage by right.

LOT COVERAGE

Proposed Impervious Area	42.45%
Maximum Impervious Area Permitted	70%

Setbacks

The proposed building expansion will decrease the south and rear setbacks; however, both will continue to exceed the minimum requirements of the R-2A District. No changes are proposed to the layout of the parking lot or to the north and east setbacks.

BUILDING SETBACKS

	Minimum Required Setback	Proposed Setback
North (Side)	15'	75' (no change)
East (Front)	40'	78' (no change)
South (Side)	15'	39'
West (Rear)	30'	143'

Vehicle Parking

The proposed expansion of Fernway Park Elementary School will increase the overall building size and add three additional classrooms. In accordance with the LDC, 1.5 parking spaces are required per classroom. While no substantive changes to the existing parking lot are proposed, one accessible parking space will be added near the main entrance to comply with ADA requirements.

PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Standard Provided	125 parking spaces (existing, no changes proposed)
Handicap Provided	5 parking spaces
Total Provided	130 parking spaces
Total Required	51 parking spaces (1.5 parking spaces per classroom, +/- 20%)

Bicycle Parking

Fernway Park currently has a bicycle parking area located north of the main entrance, which provides parking for students and staff who bike to school. An additional bicycle rack is proposed near the south end of the property near the gymnasium entrance. Providing bicycle parking supports the goals of the Comprehensive Plan by expanding alternative transportation options and improving non-motorized access to the school.

BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS

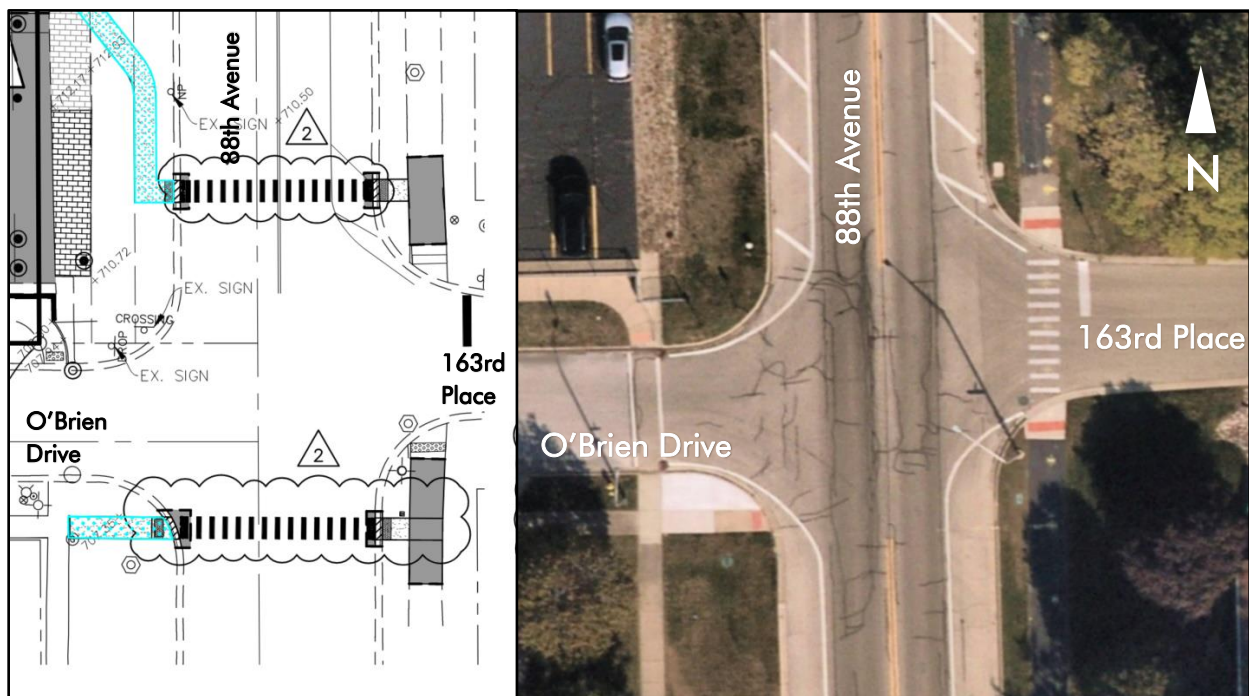
Total Provided	14 bicycle parking spaces
Total Required	5 bicycle parking spaces (10% of vehicle parking for schools)

Vehicular Mobility

The main parking lot for Fernway Park Elementary is accessed via a driveway entrance on 88th Avenue. A designated queue system is painted within the lot to manage student pick-up efficiently and minimize traffic impacts on 88th Avenue. There are no significant changes proposed to the parking lot configuration or vehicular access to the site with this petition. A traffic impact study for Fernway Park Elementary, dated April 20, 2023, is on file with the Development Services Department and provides an overview of existing traffic volumes on the site.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility

The site currently has a partial sidewalk along the southern property line near O'Brien Drive, but lacks continuous public sidewalks within the right-of-way on 88th Avenue. Staff has requested that the petitioner install the missing sidewalk along their 88th Avenue frontage. As part of the sidewalk expansion, two new crosswalks are proposed at the north and south sides of the 88th Avenue and O'Brien Drive intersection, providing a connection to the existing bicycle path on the east side of 88th Avenue. A sidewalk connection at the northwest corner of O'Brien Drive and 88th Avenue could not be provided due to existing topography, drainage conditions, and the current parking lot layout. Future site improvements should consider adding a sidewalk connection in this area.



An additional crosswalk is proposed at the intersection of 88th Avenue and 163rd Street at the north end of the school property, to provide a safer and more visible crossing point for pedestrians. As part of these improvements, the existing mid-block crosswalk near the main entrance will be removed, improving overall traffic safety. These enhancements directly support the Comprehensive Plan goal for the Fernway Planning District by promoting safer, more accessible non-motorized travel routes for students and the surrounding neighborhood. To further ensure pedestrian safety, crossing guards will continue to be present during student drop-off and pick-up hours.

Preliminary Engineering

The preliminary engineering plans, reviewed by staff, are compliant with the Land Development Code. Final Engineering approvals will be required prior to the commencement of any construction on-site.

Preliminary Landscape Plan

The preliminary landscape plans are compliant with the Land Development Code, except for the modification requested for landscape corridor requirements. The LDC requirements are met for parkway, bufferyard, foundation, and interior landscaping. The representative plant list appears to meet diversity requirements for number of species, and the percentage of species will be evaluated during the final landscape plan review.

Modification Request: *The petitioner has requested a modification from Section 6-305.D.3 for a reduction in the required landscaping amounts within the south landscape corridor along O’Brien Drive.*

Due to the proximity of the proposed building expansion to O’Brien Drive, and the current configuration of the outdoor blacktop play area, there is inadequate planting space to accommodate the Landscape Corridor requirements outlined in in Section 6-305.D.3 is not provided on site. Staff worked with the petitioner to suggest additional locations to attempt to meet the corridor requirements as much as possible. Additional trees beyond the minimum code requirements have been provided on the plans at the drop-off area in lieu of providing corridor trees between the new building expansion and O’Brien Drive. Additionally, foundation plantings along the proposed building addition exceed the requirement amounts per Section 6-305.D.5. For these reasons, Staff supports adding the proposed Modification to the Special Use Permit.

Building Elevations

The proposed building elevations consist of the building expansion and the to the existing portions of the east (front) elevations. The elevations, titled “Kirby School District 2025 Additions at Fernway Park Elementary School” submitted to the Village on March 18, 2025 are recommended for approval by staff. The proposed building elevations are designed to complement the existing facades while introducing an updated, modern style consistent with other school expansions completed in the Village in 2023. Plans include a new canopy overhang at the main entrance of Fernway Park Elementary and the addition of a new entrance near the gymnasium. The proposed expansion of the building will require a new HVAC system, which is proposed to be screened to meet the Design Standards requirements in LDC Section 6-308.J.

BUILDING HEIGHT	
Proposed	30’
Maximum Permitted in R-2A Zoning District	30’

Signage

Proposed wall signage will be administratively reviewed under a separate application to review compliance with Section 6-307 of the Land Development Code.

Right-of-Way Dedication

As part of the site plan review process, the Village has requested the petitioner dedicate the west half of 88th Avenue to the Village. Staff has recommended approval of the Plat of Dedication. While the dedication itself is not subject to Plan Commission approval, proceeding with the

dedication will result in the existing monument entrance sign for Fernway Park Elementary School being located within the public right-of-way. To address this, the Village is requesting that the petitioner enter into a Intergovernmental Agreement for the sign, which will include a provision requiring the petitioner to relocate the sign if it is damaged, altered, or needs to be removed for Village work within the right-of-way.

A condition of approval has been added to the staff recommended motion for the petitioner and staff to agree on the conditions of the Intergovernmental Agreement prior to the project proceeding to the Board of Trustees. The Agreement will be voted on by the Board of Trustees as a separate agenda item the same evening as this Special Use Permit request.

FINDINGS OF FACT

When considering an application for a special use permit, the decision-making body shall consider the Findings of Fact below. The petitioner has submitted responses to the Special Use Standards Worksheet attached to this report, and staff finds the petitioner responses sufficient for this case.

1. The special use will be consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives and standards of the Comprehensive Plan, any adopted overlay plan, and these regulations.
2. The special use will be consistent with the community character of the immediate vicinity of the parcel proposed for development.
3. The design of the proposed use will minimize adverse effects, including visual impacts on adjacent properties.
4. The proposed use will [not] have an adverse effect on the value of adjacent property.
5. The applicant has demonstrated that public facilities and services will be capable of serving the special use at an adequate level of service.
6. The applicant has made adequate legal provision to guarantee the provision and development of any open space and other improvements associated with the proposed development.
7. The development will [not] adversely affect a known archaeological, historical, or cultural resource.
8. The proposed use will comply with all additional standards imposed on it by the particular provision of these regulations authorizing such use and by all other applicable requirements of the ordinances of the Village.

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Regarding Case Number 2024-0807, also known as Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion Special Use Permit, staff recommends to accept and make findings of fact as discussed at this Plan Commission meeting and within the Staff Report dated April 29, 2025.

Staff recommends the Plan Commission approve a **Site Plan and Building Elevations** titled "Kirby School District 2025 Additions at Fernway Park Elementary School," dated March 18, 2025.

And

Staff Recommends the Plan Commission Approve a **Landscape Plan** titled “Final Landscape Plan for Fernway School Renovations,” dated March 12, 2025.

And

Staff recommends the Plan Commission approve a **Special Use Permit** for a school at 16600 88th Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall be in substantial conformance with the preliminary site plan and building elevations titled “Kirby School District 2025 Additions at Fernway Park Elementary School,” dated March 18, 2025; the landscape plan titled “Final Landscape Plan for Fernway School Renovations,” dated March 12, 2025; and the preliminary civil engineering plans titled “Final Civil Plan for Fernway School Renovations,” dated February 13, 2025.
2. Meet all building code requirements and final engineering requirements, including any required permits from outside agencies
3. All ground-based and roof-mounted mechanical equipment must be fully screened from view and shall meet the requirements listed in Section 6-308.J.
4. Submit a sign permit application to the Development Services Department for separate review. Signs are subject to additional review and approval via the sign permitting process and additional restrictions may apply.
5. Prior to the Board of Trustees hearing on this case, the petitioner shall work with Village staff to finalize the terms of an Intergovernmental Agreement, or other appropriate Hold Harmless Agreement, to allow the existing ground sign to remain in its current location.

And

Staff recommends the Plan Commission approve a **Modification** from Section 6-305.D.3 for a reduction in the required landscaping amounts within the south landscape corridor along O’Brien Drive.

STAFF RECOMMENDED MOTION

Regarding Case Number 2024-0807, also known as Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion Special Use Permit, I move to approve the Staff Recommended Action as presented in the Staff Report to the Plan Commission for this case.