

Planning Services Staff Report

For Ann Arbor City Planning Commission Meeting of June 16, 2026.

Subject: Greenhills School (850 Greenhills Drive) Special Exception Use and Site Plan for Planning Commission including Landscape Modification and Wetland Use Permit; File SP25-0022.

Proposed Planning Commission Motion

The Ann Arbor Planning Commission hereby approves a modification to the Greenhills School Special Exception Use for a private school in the R1B (Single-Family Dwelling) district to increase the maximum enrollment to 750 students based on the following findings:

1. The location, size and character of the proposed use is compatible with the R1B (Single-Family Dwelling) district and neighborhood in which the site is situated.
2. The location and size of the proposed use, and its location and layout, will not unduly inconvenience or conflict with public utility systems or the transportation network that serves the site and neighborhood.
3. All applicable standards for the proposed use have been met.

And the Ann Arbor Planning Commission hereby approves the Greenhills School Site Plan dated March 20, 2026, Landscape Modification to allow landscape elements which are part of a previously approved site plan to be maintained and continued as nonconforming, and Wetland Use Permit to impact 4,828 square feet of wetland buffer area and mitigate 7,242 square feet, subject to the following conditions:

- a. The plan is revised to show the recommended one-way vehicle circulation plan.
 - b. The wetland monitoring plan provided on sheet 11 is extended from two years to five years.
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Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend **approval** of the modified Greenhills School Special Exception Use for a private school with up to 750 students at 850 Greenhills Drive because it is compatible with its surroundings, will not unduly inconvenience or conflict with public systems, and meets all applicable criteria.

Staff recommend **conditional approval** of the Greenhills School Site Plan for Planning Commission, Landscape Modification, and Wetland Use Permit because when the conditions of approval are met, the contemplated development will comply with all

applicable ordinances, standards, and regulations and will limit the disturbance of natural features to the minimum necessary to allow reasonable use of the land.

Summary

This project to expand the Greenhills School at 850 Greenhills Drive was postponed by the Planning Commission on May 19, 2026 because, as proposed, it did not substantially meet the findings criteria in Section 5.29.5.D required to approve a new or modified Special Exception Use. The Commission noted concern about the nature and intensity of the use and felt the site layout caused inconvenience and unduly conflicted with normal traffic of the neighborhood. The Commission also inquired about wetland mitigation maintenance responsibilities and requirements.

Since the May 19, 2026 Planning Commission meeting:

- The applicants have provided an analysis of the school's pick-up and drop-off to supplement the previous transportation impact analysis.
- Staff reviewed the supplemental transportation report.
- Staff re-reviewed the wetland use permit and found that the proposed duration of the monitoring plan is less than required.

Report

Background

The Greenhills School project contains four components:

- A request to modify an existing Special Exception Use for a private school in a single-family residential district from 545 students to 750 students.
- A proposed site plan to construct two additions to the existing school and pave a fire access road circling the building.
- A request for landscape modification approval to allow previously approved landscaping to remain as nonconforming.
- A Wetland Use Permit application for the impacted wetland buffer area.

See the May 19, 2026 Staff Report for complete details about the project and each component.

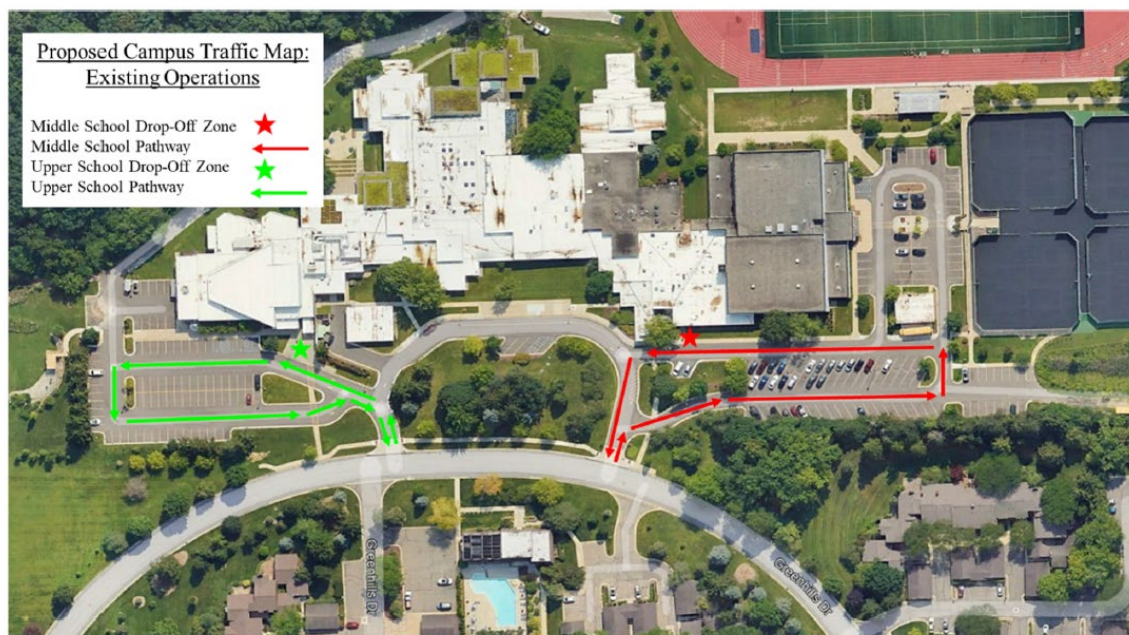
Supplemental Transportation Report and Recommendations

Drone footage of drop-off and pick-up operations was collected during morning and afternoon peak hours. The morning drop-off peak occurred between 8:20 and 8:30am. Approximately 15 cars queued (formed a line) along Greenhills Drive in the morning.

The average time it took for a student to unload from a car was 20 seconds. During afternoon pick-up peak, approximately 46 cars formed a queue on the site and extended into Greenhills Drive. The average time it took for students to load was also 20 seconds.

Figure 1. Kimley-Horn Greenhills School Operational Analysis: Existing Operations

Exhibit 1. Existing Pick-up and Drop-off Operations



Overall, two key issues were identified that influence the operations at Greenhills School. First, congestion between the north and south driveways influences driver behavior along Greenhills Drive and second, there is not adequate queueing capacity on campus with current school operations. The report recommends two main improvements:

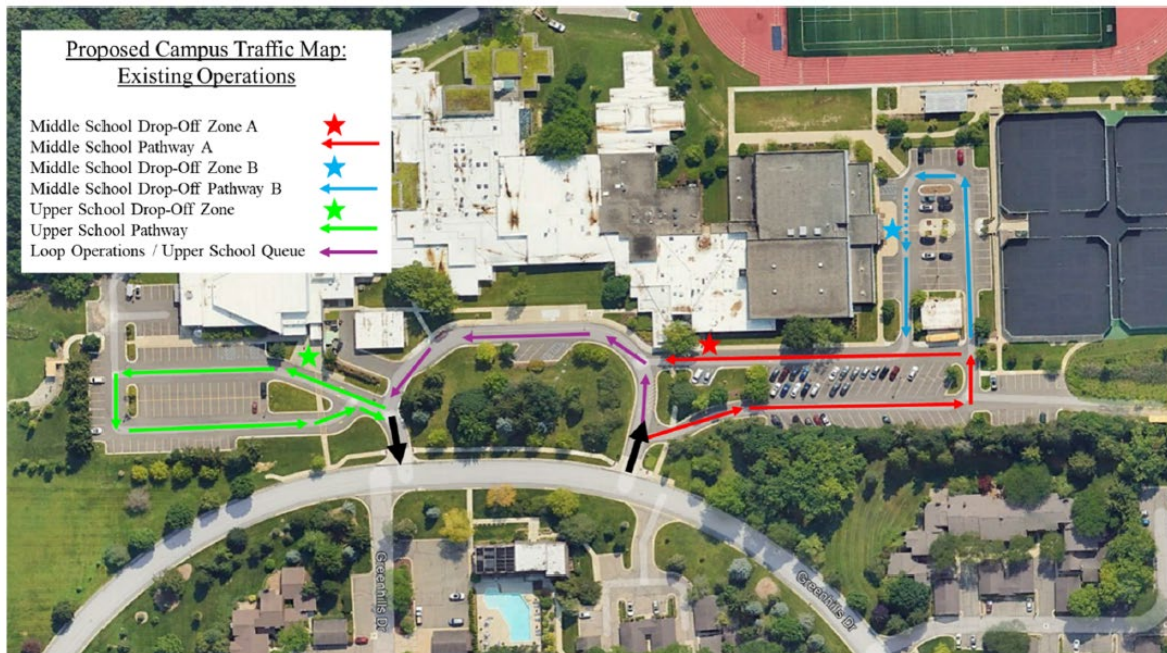
1. Convert the school driveway to a one-way loop. Extend the campus loop to include the athletic parking lot.
2. Enact a transportation demand management strategy by staggering the school's start and end times.

Converting the school driveways to a one-way loop will reduce conflict points at the two intersections with Greenhills Drive and improve safety for all users. Staggered school

hours will spread morning drop-off volume over a one-hour period (rather than the current 10-minute period). More on-campus queue capacity will reduce afternoon pick-up queueing on Greenhills Drive. Modeling shows operations along Greenhills Drive will significantly improve in the morning and slightly improve in the afternoon.

Figure 2. Kimley Horn Greenhills School Operational Analysis: Proposed Operations

Exhibit 2. Proposed Pick-up and Drop-off Operations



The report also recommends longer-term improvements, including turn restrictions at the driveways, raised crosswalks on campus, formalized carpooling, and installing sidewalks along Greenhills Drive in front of Earhart Village.

Staff Comments – Transportation Engineering staff have reviewed the supplemental transportation report, agree with its content, and recommend implementing its recommendations. The two main improvements will improve the transportation conditions on and adjacent to the site so that the nature and intensity of the private school use and the site layout will not cause undue inconvenience or conflicts with normal traffic of the neighborhood.

Wetland Mitigation

The UDC protects natural features, including wetlands, on land within the city from being disturbed or removed, along with a variety of state and federal protections, but there are no specific standards or responsibilities for general maintenance of natural features when they exist. Disturbance or removal, and mitigation, of most natural features is proposed and approved as part of a site plan. Disturbance or removal of a wetland, and mitigation, is handled with a wetland use permit as provided by state laws. A monitoring plan is required, and reports must be submitted for five years. After the five-year period, it is assumed that the mitigation has been successful and the mitigated or restored wetland (or buffer) is treated as unmitigated or unrestored wetlands.

Staff Comments – The proposed site plan includes a monitoring plan but indicates the monitoring will only last for two years. Revisions are required to indicate five years of monitoring.

Prepared by: Alexis DiLeo, Principal Planner.

Reviewed by: Hank Kelley, Deputy Planning Manager.

Attachments:

- May 19, 2026 Planning Staff Report.
- Greenhills School Operational Analysis June 2026.
- Project File [STREAM file SP25-0022](#).

Copied:

- Applicant: John Nickel, Greenhills School.
- Applicant/Engineer: Heath Hartt, Midwestern Consulting.
- Architects: Brandon Sundberg and Christa Azar, Integrated Design Solutions.
- Contractor: Jared Katz, J.S. Vig Construction.