

**Attachment A**  
**Zoning Map**



Subject Property ★

**Attachment B**  
**Site photos**



Subject Property – View south from Colton Boulevard



View west along Colton Boulevard

**Attachment B, continued**  
**Site photos**



View east along Colton Boulevard



View north of the subject property

**Attachment B, continued**  
**Site photos**

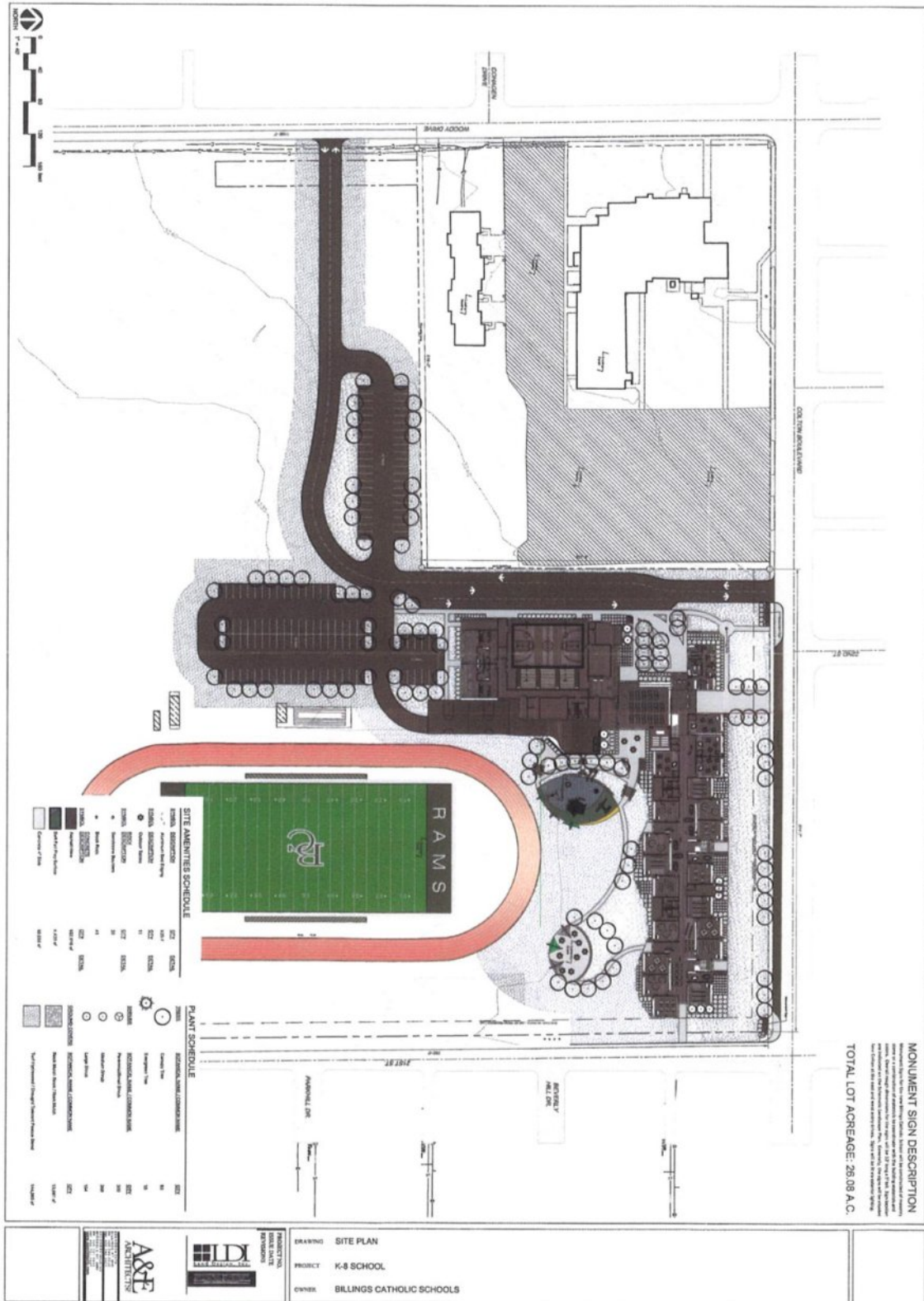


View west along Colton Boulevard



Subject Property ★

# Attachment C Site Plan





# EXTERIOR Elevations





# EXTERIOR

Drop-off / Entry



Conceptual View of the Main Entry from the Northwest, looking Southeast

**Attachment D**  
**Applicant Letter**



Planning & Community Services Dept.  
2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Billings, MT 59101

September 8, 2015

**RE: Special Review Application**  
Billings Catholic Schools

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find the attached information addressing the Special Review requirements for the new K-8 school proposed to be adjacent to St. Thomas Church on Colton Boulevard. You will find the application, plans, existing photos, and conceptual images of the proposed new facility within this package. Additionally, following are the required responses to questions in the application:

1. In what ways is your proposal consistent with the goals and policies of the adopted Growth Policy?
  - a. Land Use Element

This project will preserve the neighborhood integrity by keeping the residential zones intact and maintaining most of the existing open area on the lot. By providing a new school, the project will maintain a high quality of life for new and existing residents through increased land values, making the neighborhood more attractive with a new school amenity close by. The project creates contiguous development in an existing population center, providing a central asset to the adjacent church, surrounding neighborhoods and professional office areas. By creating this new school, an attractive community will be maintained and further enhanced by providing an educational choice in a convenient location. As an educational asset, this project will help develop a more self-contained neighborhood, supplementing the residential, professional and cultural aspects of the existing surrounding community.

Although the project includes some hardscape areas, the continued functionality of existing natural systems is ensured by leaving a very large percentage of the existing lot as native vegetation and drainage systems, supporting the living creatures in the area that use the irrigation ditch as part of their natural habitat.

The project will use City/County resources in a cost-effective manner by locating the building very close to the current utility infrastructure system, reducing costs and material requirements for the building connection. This new school building will reduce parent commuting and traffic congestion by limiting the amount of travel parents will need to perform to deliver their children to school. Three schools will be combined into one, which will allow families with multiple school-aged children to deliver to one location, rather than driving those children to different locations from the west end to downtown.

- b. Economic Development Element

Constructing a new K-8 school in this neighborhood will improve the quality of life for residents through strengthening the area economy with positive impact from a building project, raising property values with the completed project, and providing an opportunity for good living-wage jobs in the new school. Consolidating the grade levels in this school will help reduce travel time and expense through town for parents who currently deliver and pick up their children to/from multiple locations.

Ultimately, this project will help attract and retain businesses that offer competitive wages and benefits by providing an attractive educational choice for the families of its employees. To that point, the Billings Catholic Schools system is already nationally recognized for its excellence in education, and this new facility will provide a new safe and healthy school facility, improving upon the existing facilities. Having this state-of-the-art facility will allow the City to promote and further highlight educational quality as a business

608 N. 29TH ST.  
BILLINGS, MT 59101  
PH 406.248.2633  
FAX 406.248.2427

222 N. HIGGINS AVE.  
MISSOULA, MT 59802  
PH 406.721.5643  
FAX 406.721.1887

428 EAST  
MENDENHALL  
BOZEMAN, MT 59715  
PH 406.248.2633  
FAX 406.248.2427

[www.aearchitects.com](http://www.aearchitects.com)

recruitment tool in the Billings area. Furthermore, the tuition-based nature of this school will attract and retain educated citizens to not only have their children attend, but potentially be employed at this location. Tuition at BCS is based on income making it affordable, and this new facility will encourage socio-economic diversity and growth within our city.

Once the new school is completed, the existing facilities will be re-purposed for new owners and users, allowing further economic improvement in those associated neighborhoods for other desirable services.

c. Aesthetics Element

The construction of the new school will improve the image of the community by providing a creatively designed and pleasing new building that fronts Colton in an appropriate manner to create a comfortable streetscape. The new playgrounds and upgraded practice field will also be an improvement to the current grounds. This project will instill pride in the community, and also help aesthetically unify the current St. Thomas Church grounds as part of the school campus, and vice-versa, with a new landscape and parking approach to the north entrance of the property off Colton Boulevard. The new school will also provide more aesthetic open space by creating playgrounds, outdoor learning areas, and improved athletics areas for the children, which can also be accessed by the neighbors when school is not in session.

d. Natural Resources Element

This new facility and property development will use City/County resources in a cost effective manner by meeting and exceeding the newly adopted energy codes, far surpassing the existing facilities in efficiency of energy consumption from the utility infrastructure. The site has also been planned to place the building as close to the existing utility infrastructure as possible, lessening the need for extensions of utilities. The continued functionality of natural systems will be ensured through retaining a hugely significant portion of the open site area, providing natural water percolation for storm water management and creating landscaping areas that will enhance the native habitat.

e. Open Space & Recreation Element

Convenient access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be provided with new connectors to the school facility from the sidewalk along Colton Boulevard, as well as a path from the Rose Park bridge over the irrigation ditch that connects with areas south, east and west of the project site.

f. Transportation Element

Travel times will be reduced for most parents who have multiple children enrolled in the Catholic School system. Rather than having to drive to multiple locations across the city, a consolidated drop-off/pick-up location will be provided for their children. A convenient traffic connection is available from both 19<sup>th</sup> Street West and 24<sup>th</sup> Street west via Colton Boulevard. The project will maintain safe & efficient traffic flow through appropriate turn lanes, segregated traffic flow and organized movement of traffic both with the school and the St. Thomas Church site. The project will reduce traffic congestion at the site and allow for safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicle access to the school location. Furthermore, City bussing will be convenient as the school will lie along an existing Met Transit bus route 4P Parkhill. Additionally children can reach the facility by bicycling on many safe routes in the area away from street traffic.

g. Public Facilities & Service Element

This project will improve the community image by improving a largely unused and undeveloped lot, creating a presence for a strong community resource along Colton Boulevard. This improvement and the location of a school very close to the neighboring residences will increase property values and the desirability of the neighborhood.

h. Cultural and Historical Resources Element - N/A

This property does not have historical or cultural elements to Billings, but it does to many Billings' residents. The land was purchased in 1959 for one dollar, with the express purpose of building a school. Through the years, the project has been put on hold for one reason or another. All the pieces have finally fallen into place and now,

nearly 60 years after its inception, is the time to build this school. Hundreds of Billings residents will say "it was worth the wait." This will preserve and promote faith-based education which is so important to the Catholic Culture Community.

i. Community Health Element

As stated previously, this new facility will support and encourage walking and bicycling for exercise and transportation by providing convenient connections to pedestrian paths. This new school will also provide safe walking routes that already exist in the neighborhood, thereby reducing the use of vehicles for those that live within walking distance.

2. Why is there a need for the intended use of the property at this location?

Each of the three BCS buildings that make up grades K-8 are at or nearly at capacity. Several closets are being utilized as office space for instructors, and special education teachers. St. Francis Primary is renting the community room and a corner of the church for classes from Mary Queen of Peace, which is expensive year after year. For the first time in history, the schools have been forced to limit enrollment at several grade levels. There is no space for growth. Additionally, the schools are nearing the end of their useful lifespan for educational purposes. It is more cost-effective and learning-effective to build a new facility than to repair the old ones. The new facility will provide room for growth, increased safety measures for the students, safer and more convenient drop off and pick up areas for the parents, increased educational opportunities through increased electives.

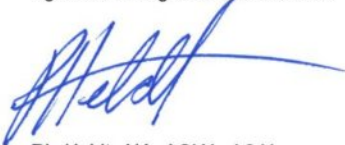
3. How will the public interest be served if this application is approved?

There has been a steadily growing desire for enrollment in the K-8 grades within the BCS system for many years, with BCS having to limit enrollment due to the capacity of the current facilities. This new building would accommodate current students while encouraging new families to attend. The thoroughly analyzed and planned capacity of this school will allow new students enrollment opportunity to eliminate current enrollment limitations.

4. Prepare a written statement addressing what is intended to be done with the property, including new construction or change in the use of the property, and why the special review is being sought.

This project is currently zoned R-9600, which requires a Special Review for the allowable use of a primary and secondary school. The property was originally purchased in the 1950's with this use in mind and is now seeking approval for the allowable use of the the construction of the new K-8 school. A new building is proposed of approximately 87,000 square feet, consisting of 36 classrooms, library, multi-function areas (on two levels with an elevator), and chapel music rooms, gym, commons area, kitchen, administration area, and utility support spaces. The sitework will consist of a new approach from Colton Boulevard and Woody Drive with drop-off drives in the site, and along Colton Boulevard, as well as new entry plazas, parking, parking landscaping, and a refurbished existing track & field.

Sincerely,  
**A&E Architects, PC**  
*Agent for Billings Catholic Schools*



Ric Heldt, AIA, ACHA, ASAI  
*Principal*