

Site Plan

The design team pursued a collaborative relationship with town leadership, the local community, and the faculty and staff of the Sandy Hook School in a series of hands-on programming workshops as detailed on the Community page. These workshops were essential to developing a greater understanding of community needs and desires and participants engaged with the design team to explore site design issues.

Dickinson Drive Entry

The primary goal of the Dickinson Drive re-design is to create a new experience for students, parents, staff and visitors alike. The re-design concept also seeks to define a unified civic entry from the Senior Center to the Firehouse and improve the safety of existing traffic conditions in the area approaching the entrance drive.

To create the improved civic entry along Riverside, the concept calls for low stone walls and new plantings from the Senior Center to the Firehouse. This stretch of Riverside Road will also replicate the new streetscaping at the nearby Sandy Hook village intersection, with paved sidewalks and new lighting.

The traffic leading to the entrance drive will be improved with the widening of Riverside Road, at both approaches to Dickinson Drive. This will allow for a left turn lane in the west bound lane, and a center median east bound. Dickinson Drive will also be widened to allow for a median and turn lanes. The design team has held discussions with the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire House to plan for landscape elements between the Fire House and the drive, consisting of a continuation of the low stone walls, plantings, and a trellis or screen wall. A sidewalk will continue along the Fire House side of the drive to connect pedestrians to the site.

While the drive starts off in its current location off of Riverside, it will then be re-routed to traverse between two areas of wetlands at the rear of the Senior Center property and thus enter the site at a different location than the previous drive. A portion of the hillside will need to be re-graded to allow for this new route, creating a small rise and fall as one enters the site. Check out the experience here: [3-D animation video](#).

The former drive route will be maintained for exiting buses and for emergency vehicle access.



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The design team carefully considered several locations for the new Sandy Hook School on the existing site. These locations were further evaluated by an array of design characteristics, including: security, access and entrance to the school, views and day lighting, adjacencies to fields and outdoor areas, and the potential for establishing physical and symbolic connections with nature.

The school site is characterized by its topographic features: a relatively level plateau bounded by a wooded hill along the north edge and wooded low lying wetlands to the south and east. The re-design of Dickinson Drive brings traffic in at the very north and center of the site, allowing a clear panoramic view as you enter the site. This orientation of the drive and natural features suggested the placement of site elements:

- + The sub-divided parking lot is located immediately upon entering the site at the north end – allowing the parking lot to stretch out along the hill from west to east, and creating a natural buffer and good sightlines to the school.
- + A dedicated bus loop wraps around the parking lot and loops in front of the school, allowing enough length to safely queue 12 to 14 buses. The bus loop provides another buffering layer to the school, and then exits out the former drive.
- + The larger parking area to the west provides for a 100 staff parking spaces. The smaller parking area to the east provides for a parent drop off loop and 50 visitor parking spaces.
- + The school building stretches out along the southern edge of the site, allowing the classroom wings in the rear to reap southern daylight and views into the wooded wetlands beyond.
- + The ball fields, a Little League softball field and an enlarged regulation soccer field, are overlapped with each other and nestled into the southwest corner. New plantings will help buffer and screen the fields from Crestwood Drive and the neighboring residential area.