



October 7, 2009

Honorable Phil Andrews  
President, Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Andrews:

On September 22, 2009, we presented the comments of the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA) to the Council on the proposed 2009 County Growth Policy. In that testimony, we opposed several changes that would weaken the Growth Policy's response to the impact that growth has on our schools. I am writing today to provide further information on two of the items we discussed. We ask that the Council consider this additional information as it reviews the PHED Committee's recommendation on the policy.

First, although the Board of Education chose not to oppose the Planning Board's proposal to raise the school facilities payment threshold to 110% of school capacity, MCCPTA opposes this change. The Board of Education says that it does not necessarily begin planning additions when capacity exceeds 105% (the current threshold), but this tells only half the story. As we noted in our testimony, four clusters today have capacity between 105% and 110%, and MCPS is planning 8 modernizations, 7 additions and 1 program relocation in order to relieve overcapacity at these schools. In our opinion, there is no justification to shift the burden of these capacity projects from new development to the general tax base.

Further, we have studied MCPS capacity projections made in the past four fiscal years (FY07 through FY10).<sup>1</sup> A projected overcapacity of 105% serves as an effective "early warning sign" of impending severe overcrowding. Of the four clusters in moratorium today (including Northwest), Clarksburg projected future utilization between 105% and 110% in the FY07 CIP; BCC in the FY08 CIP and Northwest in the FY07 CIP. The additional facilities payments that these clusters could have generated would be useful in addressing the overcrowding situation each cluster faces now.

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we looked at the capacity projected five years out in each CIP, which is the same test that the current Growth Policy uses. For example, in FY 10, we looked at projected 2014-15 capacity; in FY 07, we looked at projected 2010-11 capacity. These projections provide the best indicator of the impact the Growth Policy would have over the long term.

Moreover, clusters that project to exceed 105% of capacity generally progress to projections above 110% or more before adequate facilities are constructed. For example, the Richard Montgomery cluster projects 106% of capacity in the FY08 CIP, and 107% of capacity in the FY09 CIP before elementary school capacity spiked to a projected 118% in FY10 projections. Similarly, Damascus, Rockville and Whitman projected capacities between 105%-110% for at least a year before crossing the 110% threshold. The Planning Board's proposed change would deprive the County of revenues to address these needs for a year or more.

We do not believe that the County should exempt new developments from paying for the additional impact they create on an already overburdened cluster, simply because the development appears one or two years before overcrowding gets even worse. We urge the Council to retain the 105% threshold for school facilities payments.

Second, in our testimony, we recommended that the Council study whether the Growth Policy tests should apply on a school-by-school basis at the elementary school level. We suggested that this change may more precisely tailor growth policy to the impact on schools by allowing development in portions of a cluster where capacity exists while appropriately placing the brakes on growth where severe overcapacity exists in a school enrollment area.

For the Council's further consideration, we are submitting an analysis we have conducted of application of the Growth Policy thresholds on a school basis at the elementary level. Under both a school-based and a cluster-based approach, roughly the same number of schools would qualify for facilities payments or moratorium (64 under the current test, 61 under a school test). However, the distribution of payments and moratoria would be different. The differences are most notable at the moratorium level. Under a school-based test, 6 schools would qualify for a moratorium where there is no building restriction or facilities payment now. 16 schools would shift from a facilities payment to a moratorium, but 4 schools would be freed for development (but triggering a facilities payment) where a moratorium applies now.

MCCPTA does not know which developments, if any, are planned in the elementary school areas affected by these changes. We recommend that the Council obtain additional information from the Planning Board to determine the impact that such a change would have on the eligibility of pending applications before the Board. With this additional information, the Council may assess whether a school-based test at the elementary school level more appropriately focuses the County's policies in areas most affected by growth.

MCCPTA appreciates the opportunity to express these additional views. Should you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Romero". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kay Romero  
President, Montgomery County Council of PTAs

cc:

Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council  
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Council  
Valerie Ervin, Montgomery County Council  
Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council  
Mike Knapp, Montgomery County Council  
George Leventhal, Montgomery County Council  
Nancy Navarro, Montgomery County Council  
Duchy Trachtenberg, Montgomery County Council

Attachments:

MCCPTA Study, Application of the County Growth Policy on an Elementary School Level



The Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations

MCCPTA Study

October 2009

Compiled by Steve Augustino, Chair  
MCCPTA CIP Committee

## **Application of the County Growth Policy On an Elementary School Level**

### **Executive Summary:**

If the Growth Policy applied at the school level for elementary schools:

- 61 schools would qualify for either facilities payments (34 schools) or moratorium (27 schools). This is a net of 3 fewer schools than under the current policy.
- 7 schools would qualify for facilities payments that do not qualify now.
- 6 schools would qualify for building moratorium status that do not face any restriction now.
- 16 schools currently qualifying for facilities payments would fall below the facilities payment threshold. Of these, 4 have utilizations below 90%.
- 4 schools would shift from moratorium to facilities payments (building would be permitted but would require a facilities payment).
- 16 schools would shift from a facilities payment to moratorium. All but 1 of these schools either has a relevant CIP project or is on the watch list for an addition.

**Note: For purposes of this analysis, Northwest (120.13% capacity) was assumed to qualify for facilities payments, and not be in moratorium. Clarksburg, which is in moratorium due to a lack of middle school capacity, was analyzed solely based on its elementary school capacity.**

Source: MCPS capacity projections for 2014-15, FY2010 Educational Facilities Master Plan

**Elementary Schools  
That Would Trigger  
Facilities Payments  
(34 schools)**

Schools moving from no restriction to facilities payments highlighted in yellow.  
Schools moving from moratorium to facilities payments highlighted in green.

School	Cluster	Cluster Status Under Growth Policy	School Status Under Growth Policy	Utilization	Surplus / (Deficit)	CIP Projects
Arcola	DCC (Northwood base area)	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	110%	(53)	None
Barnsley	Rockville	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	116%	(84)	None
Beall	Richard Montgomery	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	119%	(103)	Watch list
Burning Tree	Whitman	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	111%	(46)	None
Burnt Mills	NEC (Blake / Springbrook base areas)		Facil Pymt	108%	(29)	None
Burtonsville	NEC (Paint Branch base area)	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	109%	(51)	None
Carson	Quince Orchard	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	114%	(96)	Watch list. ELC relocated to Jones Lane
Cedar Grove	Clarksburg / Damascus	Facil Pymt (ES level) / open	Facil Pymt	117%	(80)	New Clarksburg Village ES (tbd)
Chevy Chase	BCC	Moratorium	Facil Pymt	109%	(38)	Addition (tbd)
Clopper Mill	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	118%	(74)	None
Cloverly	NEC (Paint Branch base area)	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	111%	(50)	None
College Gardens	Richard Montgomery	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	109%	(63)	Mod (08)
Daly	Clarksburg	Facil Pymt (ES level)	Facil Pymt	116%	(83)	New Clarksburg Village ES (tbd)
Diamond	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	110%	(53)	None
DuFief	Wootton		Facil Pymt	106%	(25)	None
Flower Valley	Rockville	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	114%	(62)	None

Glen Haven	DCC (Northwood base area)	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	110%	(50)	None
Great Seneca Creek	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	117%	(113)	Watch list
Greencastle	NEC (Paint Branch base area)	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	112%	(67)	None
Jones Lane	Quince Orchard	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	110%	(46)	+ ELC from Carson
Kensington-Parkwood	Walter Johnson	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	115%	(77)	None
Lake Seneca	Seneca Valley	Moratorium	Facil Pymt	110%	(41)	Waters Landing/Lake Seneca Addition (tbd)
Maryvale	Rockville	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	111%	(66)	Modernization (18)
McAuliffe	Seneca Valley	Moratorium	Facil Pymt	112%	(65)	None
McNair	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	114%	(87)	None
Mill Creek Towne	Magruder		Facil Pymt	111%	(45)	None
Page	NEC (Blake base area)		Facil Pymt	105%	(17)	None
Potomac	Churchill		Facil Pymt	110%	(41)	Modernization (18) Boundary change
Rock Creek Valley	Rockville	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	116%	(59)	None
Somerset	BCC	Moratorium	Facil Pymt	116%	(74)	None
Summit Hall	Gaithersburg		Facil Pymt	105%	(22)	None
Twinbrook	Richard Montgomery	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	119%	(100)	Watch list
Westover	NEC (Springbrook base area)		Facil Pymt	105%	(13)	None
Wood Acres	Whitman	Facil Pymt	Facil Pymt	118%	(101)	Watch list

16 schools would no longer qualify for facilities payments: Fox Chapel (Clarksburg, 84%), Ashburton (WJ, 100%), Farmland (WJ, 98%), Garrett Park (WJ, 86%), Luxmanor (WJ, 96%), Germantown (Northwest, 94%), Forest Knolls (Northwood, 101%), Kemp Mill (Northwood, 95%), Fairland (Paint Branch, 91%), Galway (Paint Branch, 97%), Fields Road (QO, 89%), Thurgood Marshall (QO, 98%), Brookhaven (Wheaton, 94%), Weller Road (Wheaton, 92%), Bannockburn (Whitman, 99%), Carderock Springs (Whitman, 79%).

**Elementary Schools  
That Would Be  
In Moratorium  
(27 schools)**

Schools qualifying for moratorium that did not previously qualify are highlighted in yellow.

School	Cluster	Cluster Status Under Growth Policy	School Status Under Growth Policy	Utilization	Surplus / (Deficit)	CIP Projects
Bethesda	BCC	Moratorium	Moratorium	143%	(157)	Addition (tbd)
Bradley Hills	Whitman	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	151%	(164)	Addition (tbd)
Brown Station	Quince Orchard	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	128%	(117)	Modernization (16)
Clarksburg	Clarksburg	Facil Pymt (ES level)	Moratorium	140%	(133)	New Clarksburg Village ES (tbd)
Darnestown	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	197%	(200)	Addition (tbd)
Flower Hill	Magruder		Moratorium	130%	(121)	Watch list
Georgian Forest	DCC (Kennedy base area)		Moratorium	177%	(243)	Addition (tbd)
Highland View	DCC (Northwood base area)	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	159%	(155)	Addition (tbd)
Little Bennett	Clarksburg	Facil Pymt (ES level)	Moratorium	132%	(219)	New Clarksburg Village ES (tbd)
Matsunaga	Northwest	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	139%	(259)	Watch list
Meadow Hall	Rockville	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	123%	(76)	None
North Chevy Chase	BCC	Moratorium	Moratorium	162%	(142)	Addition (tbd)
Oakland Terrace	DCC (Einstein base area)		Moratorium	190%	(405)	McKenney Hills reopening to relieve overcrowding
Resnik	Magruder		Moratorium	120%	(94)	None
Ride	Seneca Valley	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	127%	(128)	Watch list
Ritchie Park	Richard Montgomery	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	136%	(146)	Addition (tbd)

Rock Creek Forest	BCC	Moratorium	Moratorium	148%	(180)	Modernization (15)
Rosemary Hills	BCC	Moratorium	Moratorium	127%	(132)	Addition (tbd)
Shriver	DCC (Wheaton base area)	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	121%	(124)	Watch list
Sligo Creek	DCC (Northwood base area)	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	120%	(108)	East Silver Spring and Takoma Park additions to relieve overcrowding
Strawberry Knoll	Gaithersburg		Moratorium	124%	(114)	Watch list
Viers Mill	DCC (Wheaton base area)	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	176%	(273)	Addition (tbd)
Waters Landing	Seneca Valley	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	132%	(161)	Waters Landing/Lake Seneca Addition (tbd)
Westbrook	BCC	Moratorium	Moratorium	192%	(247)	Addition (tbd) Gym (12)
Wheaton Woods	DCC (Wheaton base area)	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	126%	(90)	Modernization (16)
Woodlin	DCC (Einstein base area)		Moratorium	135%	(134)	McKenney Hills reopening to relieve overcrowding
Wyngate	Walter Johnson	Facil Pymt	Moratorium	164%	(271)	Addition (tbd)