

Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations



September 10, 2024

Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Ave., 6th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Friedson and Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony on the GIP and the related schools' Impact Tax. MCCPTA participated on the Planning Board's Growth & Infrastructure Policy (GIP) review, Schools Technical Advisory Team (STAT) and were supportive of the *original draft recommendations* submitted to the Planning Board in May. Schools' item 4.1 recommendation was "to continue to calculate standard school impact taxes at 100% of the cost of a seat using the School Impact area student generation rates." In June, the Planning Board modified this recommendation to adjust the MCPS per seat calculation to the "true per student cost of school construction to the county." This new calculation subtracts the proportion of state aid accounted for in the six year CIP and therefore, *leaving a 30% gap* in the current per seat calculation assessed.

MCCPTA strongly opposes this change to the calculation formula for the following reasons:

- 1) We oppose this calculation discount because it punches a hole in the bottom line of the MCPS CIP budget both immediately *and* over time.
  - This 30% reduction is a blunt tool which could have a significant impact for FY26, the 2nd year of the CIP, and the cumulative effect would mean less capacity to keep up with the impact of new housing on schools.
  - The FY26 impact tax projection of 24 million would be significantly lowered, a 30% adjustment would be 7 million, 50% of a full addition.
  - This adjustment would be layered on the other more surgical tools, adjusting impact taxes based on housing types the county wants to see more available for families. MCCPTA agrees with those targeted adjustments.
- 2) We oppose the modification based on the expressed rationale that state aid, which is derived from tax payer dollars (including Montgomery County families), should be excluded from the cost calculus because it is somehow not a part of the "true cost" of a seat.
  - What makes state aid different from local financing dollars in the calculation? Why should developers be exempt from an assessment based on the full cost of school infrastructure?
  - The planning board was thoughtful in its original recommendations, balancing the adequate facility ordinance with encouraging more housing types for families. We encourage this tiered approach, where we all pitch in to assure quality school

infrastructure for current and future residents. In the future we'd like to see that tiered approach where exemptions are implemented as well.

Finally, we cannot continue down this path of decision-making in a siloed and redundant manner. We need an innovative work group on school infrastructure financing going forward. We respectfully request that the Council convene a work group outside of this routine process to engage *all* parties, including representatives from MCPS and the Board of Education. This workgroup should be charged with benchmarking local infrastructure tax rubrics across the metropolitan area, with the goal of recommending a future financial mechanism(s) that is sustainable and does not jeopardize the maintenance, replacement and expansion of MCPS school facilities.

MCCPTA values Council members' support of MCPS facilities because we all believe our schools are shared community assets. We are ready to engage with County leadership in this work. We look forward to collaboration in the near future as the GIP and impact tax recommendations are considered in Council committee work sessions this fall.

Regards,

Brigid Howe, MCCPTA President  
Rodney Peele, MCCPTA VP Advocacy  
Sally McCarthy, MCCPTA CIP Budget Chair

CC:  
MCPS Superintendent, Dr. Thomas Taylor  
MCPS Board of Education President, Karla Silvestre  
MCPS Board of Education Vice President, Lynne Harris