

PHED COMMITTEE #2
February 6, 2017
Worksession

M E M O R A N D U M

February 2, 2017

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

FROM:  Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Administrator

SUBJECT: **Worksession**—Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan—evaluation of public school and transportation adequacy at buildout; fiscal impact statement

Councilmembers: Please bring the Draft Plan and Appendix to this worksession.

This memorandum addresses public school adequacy at the time of the buildout of the Draft Plan, and the Executive Branch's fiscal impact statement. The sector plan addresses what Bethesda should become when it is built out. Measures of public facility adequacy, therefore, examine whether or not there can be sufficient school capacity at buildout to meet the need generated by existing and future development at buildout. Public facility adequacy at intermediate points between now and buildout are regulated by the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP).

1. Public school adequacy at buildout. Several individuals testified that the housing proposed in the Draft Plan would exacerbate present overcrowding in the public schools in the B-CC Cluster. The discussion of the issue is on pp. 92-94.

The following analysis compares the future enrollment by level to the total capacity that could be created by additions and school re-openings. Regarding enrollment, Council staff took the Year 2031 forecast in the B-CC Cluster as representative of the buildout of current master plans, and added to them the new students estimated in Council's tentatively approved Lyttonsville Sector Plan and the Final Draft Bethesda CBD Sector Plan. (The students generated in prior approved plans are already assumed in the 2031 forecast.) The Final Draft anticipated up to 8,456 more units in the Bethesda CBD, resulting in 355 ES students, 145 MS students, and 195 HS students. These estimates are based on the student generation rates for the Southwest region¹ in effect when the plan was under development. However, these rates were updated in June 2016; the updated rates have been used as the basis for the Council's analyses of the Lyttonsville Plan and the 2016-2020 SSP. The updated Southwest region rates suggest that 8,456 more units in the Bethesda CBD would generate 431 ES students, 178 MS students, and 237 HS students.

Regarding capacity, Council staff examined those schools that could accommodate an addition given the size of the site, and the closed-school sites that could accommodate a new school. The detailed assumptions are shown on the next page:

¹ The Southwest region includes the B-CC, Churchill, Walter Johnson, Richard Montgomery, Rockville, Whitman, and Wootton Clusters.

Long-Term Enrollment Forecast in the B-CC Cluster

	ES Enrollment	MS Enrollment	HS Enrollment
B-CC Cluster in 2031 without Bethesda & Lyttonsville plans	3,600	1,900	2,500
Draft Bethesda CBD Plan	+431	+178	+237
Lyttonsville Plan	+272	+111	+149
Total	4,303	2,189	2,886

Long-Term Program Capacity Potential in the B-CC Cluster

	ES Capacity	MS Capacity	HS Capacity
B-CC Cluster in 2016	3,826	1,097	1,683
B-CC HS, planned addition			+725
B-CC MS #2, planned new school		+935	
B-CC MS #2, add 12 more rooms		+255	
Westland MS, add 6 more rooms		+128	
Expand Westbrook ES	+184		
New ESs at Lynnbrook and Rollingwood	+1,290		
Total	5,300	2,415	2,408

Assumptions:

- Southwest Region student generation rates for Bethesda CBD and the B-CC Cluster portion of Lyttonsville.
- Eastern Region student generation rates for the Einstein Cluster portion of Lyttonsville.
- 1,250sf/unit for multi-family low-rise units in Lyttonsville.
- Expand Westbrook ES +8 rooms (+184 capacity), bringing its capacity to 734.
- Lynnbrook ES with a 740-student capacity and Rollingwood ES (only 4.07 acres) with a 550-student capacity.

The Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR) believes that Lynnbrook is on too small a footprint (4.21 acres), is not close to major roads, and notes that it currently houses MCPS administrative offices. However, the block on which Lynnbrook sits also includes a 5.83-acre park (former MCPS property, when Lynnbrook was an operating school) which is partially used for recreation by B-CC HS now. A new 750-student ES can fit on the 4.21-acre portion of the site, and the 5.83-acre park can be shared between the HS and ES. The administrative offices are readily relocatable: as MCPS employees they would be the easiest to relocate, and there is no pressing reason why they would have to continue at Lynnbrook. Finally, Lynnbrook being located within a residential neighborhood is not unlike most ESs. Bus access should not be a problem, especially since all of East Bethesda is within the one-mile walkshed of Lynnbrook, as would be many of the students from the proposed high-rise residences.

CBAR also believes reopening Rollingwood is problematic, since it currently houses the French International School, and because such a school would result in a major boundary change among ES service areas. However, the International School's lease terminates on June 30, 2021, and intra-cluster boundary changes is the norm when a new elementary school opens.

The analysis reconfirms the conclusion from the Westbard and Lyttonsville Sector Plan analyses in 2016: that the cluster would have sufficient capacity at buildout at the ES and MS levels, but that B-CC HS would be well over capacity, even with the its addition that is currently under construction. The Westbard analysis examined both the Whitman and B-CC Clusters and concluded that Whitman HS could have a second addition beyond the one already programmed in the CIP. With that extra addition there would be sufficient capacity at the HS level.²

Council staff concludes that there are sufficient opportunities for adding school capacity for the B-CC Cluster to accommodate the public school students generated by the housing proposed by the Planning Board in the Bethesda Downtown Plan—even assuming the unlikely occurrence that all the proposed housing would actually materialize. This does not mean that the Council must approve as much density as the Plan proposes; it only means that school capacity is not a reason to approve less.

2. Fiscal Impact Statement (FIS). The Executive is required to review the fiscal impacts of each proposed plan, identifying to the degree possible what resources would be needed in future County capital and operating budgets associated with the public facilities recommended.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) transmitted an FIS several weeks ago, but it transmitted an updated version today (February 2) and is on ©1. It identifies about \$132.5 million in capital costs to the County over the next few decades. The major elements include: the portion of the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line from the north edge of the CBD to the new Metro South Entrance (\$32.8 million), the re-design of Norfolk Avenue (\$23.0 million), four bikeway improvements (\$32.8 million), 47 new bikesharing stations (\$4.7 million; with an annual operating cost of \$1.7 million), and the replacement of Fire Station #6 (\$17 million). Parks construction and expansions have not yet been costed out by the Parks Department.

The updated FIS identifies about \$14.15 million more County cost annually, \$12.45 million of which is for teachers and other MCPS staff associated with the additional enrollment noted in the table on the preceding page. The \$1.7 million balance is for the operating costs of 47 new bikeshare stations.

f:\orlin\fy17\phed\bethesda cbd\170206phed-schools.docx

² The Westbard analysis also showed that there would be MS space shortage in the Whitman Cluster that could be accommodated by surplus MS space in the B-CC Cluster. A “Southwest Consortium” combining the B-CC and Whitman Clusters is one way that the MS and HS shortages in these two clusters could be accommodated.

**County Capital and Operating Cost Estimates
Assumed to be Incurred as a Result of the
Bethesda Downtown Plan
12/9/2016; revised on 2/2/2017**

Capital Improvement Projects

Project	Description	Cost Estimate (\$)
Road/Sidewalk/Bike Infrastructure Construction	<p>The following items and costs assume County responsibility (as identified on page 153 of the Draft Plan dated July 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike Share Station Installations [\$4,085,000 – acquisition and installation costs of 47 stations and bike sets] • Extend Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor 4 from Bethesda North Station to the northern boundary of the plan [\$20,200,000 – based on 0.63-mile extension] • Extend Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Bethesda North Entrance to Bethesda South Entrance [\$12,500,000 – based on 0.39-mile extension] • Bethesda South Entrance Circulator Improvements [\$4,800,000] • Bus Circulator Expansion [\$2,200,000 based on 4 additional buses over 12-year period] • MD191/Huntington Parkway [\$3,000,000] • Pearl Street Connector [\$3,000,000 – likely to be built as part of future private development] • Strathmore Street Extension [\$3,100,000 – likely to be built as part of future private development] • North Bethesda Trail Widening and Lighting [\$300,000 – likely to be built as part of future private development] • Bethesda Avenue/Willow Lane Bike Lanes [\$2,300,000] • Woodmont Avenue Bike Lanes [\$1,600,000] • MD191 (Bradley Boulevard) Bike Lanes [\$26,900,000] • Arlington Road Bike Lanes [\$2,000,000] • Norfolk Avenue Redesign [\$23,600,000] • Pearl Street Redesign [\$5,800,000] • Wayfinding Signage [\$100,000] • Pearl Street Connector [N/A – to be built as part of Purple Line] • Undergrounding of Utilities [N/A – to be built as part of private development] 	115,485,000
Fire and Rescue Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Station #6 Replacement - assumes new fire station to be constructed; estimate based on Travilah Fire Station #32, a four-bay station. Planning Department identifies other options, including renovation of the existing station or a public-private partnership for a new building on the existing site that incorporates a ground floor fire station and residential. 	17,000,000
Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New park construction and expansions 	Parks Department does not yet have a scope or cost estimate
Subtotal Capital Improvement Projects:		132,485,000

Potential Future Fiscal Impacts

Department	Description	Cost Estimate (\$)
Transportation	Annual costs associated with operating 47 new bike share stations over a 12-year period.	One time costs: 0
		Ongoing Costs: (year one and beyond) 1,704,268
MCPS	Elementary: 431 students x \$15,006 per student	One time costs: N/A
	Middle: 178 students x \$14,406 per student	Ongoing Costs: (year one and beyond) 12,446,076
	High: 237 students x \$14,406 per student	
Subtotal Operating Budget Impacts (One time costs):		0
Subtotal Operating Budget Impacts (ongoing costs):		14,150,344
Subtotal Potential Future Fiscal Impacts:		146,635,344

Notes and Assumptions:

1. The following departments reported no fiscal impacts associated with this Master Plan: Permitting Services (DPS), Libraries (MCPL), Police (POL), Fire and Rescue (FRS).
2. Transportation fiscal impacts do not include currently programmed/funded County CIP projects, State Highway Administration (SHA) projects that are funded or identified in the Master Plan (including the Purple Line light rail), and developer contributions/projects that are either wholly assumed or identified in the Master Plan.
3. Projections for additional affordable and workforce housing are difficult to estimate at this time and is partly dependent on developers' plans for residential development.
4. Projections for environmental improvements and recommendations are difficult to estimate at this time due to undefined scope and is partly dependent on developers' plans for residential development.
5. MCPS enrollment projections assume maximum build-out at 8,456 high-rise units. Student generation rates are based on actuals from the Southwest region as of June 2016. Per-student cost estimates are based on the MCPS FY17 Approved Operating Budget, Table 6 (page vi-1); includes Local Contribution and State funding sources.