



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

June 15, 2017

REQUEST: City Schools' 2017 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Master Plan (CEFMP)

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with recommendations

STAFF: Jennifer Leonard

PETITIONER: Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools)

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The Regulations for the Administration of the Public School Construction Program (under the Maryland State Department of Education, or MSDE) require that Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) annually submit an updated and detailed Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP). Maryland's school districts are expected to have clearly established master plans for their facilities, and the annual EFMP submittal is the means for updating or reporting any changes to the existing master plans.

This plan is a requirement of the State of Maryland Interagency Committee on Public School Construction (IAC). Traditionally City Schools has submitted an annual EFMP that consisted of an updated master plan. With the 2013 approval of the 10-year, 21st Century Building Plan (Building Plan) however, City Schools submitted a *Comprehensive* Educational Facilities Master Plan (CEFMP), to provide a long-range perspective and a set of goals to be realized over the next five to ten years. The 21st Century Building Plan's approval expanded the scope of City Schools' portfolio review to reflect the school district's effort to ensure that all students have a wide range of quality school options in every area of the city and that all students have the opportunity to attend a healthy, safe, and modern 21st century facility. City Schools has developed new systems to capture detailed data from and about schools and align the portfolio review with other reform efforts.

City Schools currently has 160 buildings and an enrollment of 73,953 K-12th grade students in City Schools' buildings, as of September 30, 2016. An additional 8,401 students are housed in non-City Schools' buildings.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This CEFMP is consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Master Plan, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, specifically LIVE, Goals 1 (Improve Public Schools and Libraries) and 3 (Ensure a Culture of Learning by Enhancing Educational and Vocational Opportunities for all Baltimoreans). The CEFMP is cross-referenced in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

In December 2015, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners approved the Baltimore City Public Schools' Five-Year Strategic Plan: Excellence & Equity 2020. This plan provides transparent direction and goals in which progress can be measured, including targets for increased student achievement, sound management, and effective stewardship. The 2017 CEFMP is closely aligned with the mission, vision, goals, and priorities identified in this plan, especially Goal 3 (Climate and Facilities) and Goal 6 (Portfolio of Great Schools).

ANALYSIS

The Planning Commission is required to review the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Master Plan (CEFMP) and updates to that plan on an annual basis. The purpose of the CEFMP is to identify current policies, programs, and community changes; serve as a blueprint to guide City Schools decisions on facilities usage and investments; assist City Schools Departments with programmatic changes as they relate to facilities; and identify priority projects for the 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The 2017 CEFMP contains both educational- and community-related elements that impact facility usage, which include: long-range facilities planning policies and regulations, community demographic and socioeconomic analysis, and projected student enrollment. It has six chapters plus appendices. The CEFMP chapters are: District-wide and Facility Planning Goals and Objectives; Community Analysis – Demographic and Housing Development; Enrollments and Enrollment Projections; Capacity Analysis and Facility Utilization; Facility Condition Analysis; and Policies and Guidance. In addition, the CEFMP includes enrollment projections for ten years and a building conditions assessment. It reports on the changes to City Schools' programs and facilities, and presents the "road map" for future decision-making that will impact school facilities. The CEFMP also reflects Board-approved amendments to City Schools' Building Plan, programmatic changes due to alignment with Building Plan amendments and demographic changes, and other annual data updates.

Two components of the CEFMP, required by the Building Plan MOU among City Schools, Baltimore City, Maryland Stadium Authority, and the IAC, are a system-wide *Utilization Plan* and elements of the *Comprehensive Maintenance Plan*.

Utilization Plan

A central goal of the Building Plan is to increase the average utilization rate of City Schools' buildings. Utilization targets are set to provide a way for the School Board of Commissioners and MOU partners to measure progress in moving towards efficient overall utilization of its buildings with new construction, renovations, and closures. For new replacement schools or major renovations, a utilization target of 85% is optimal. Per MOU requirements, "future IAC projects approvals may be withheld if projected utilization rates do not meet utilization targets" during the annual review. Many factors could impact utilization and make this difficult. Some of these factors are unanticipated delays in construction that delay completion dates, construction cost changes that affect the number of schools completed in Phase I, changes in state rated capacity, charter renewal decisions, and unanticipated changes in district enrollment.

The 2016-17 school year district-wide utilization rate for City Schools is 82%, meeting the Buildings Plan Program Intermediate Milestone of 80%. This rate is relatively low compared to other jurisdictions in the state. The system-wide rate is impacted by high levels of underutilization among middle, middle-high/Transformation, and high schools with 38%, 51%, and 67% utilization respectively.

Current enrollment projections show future utilization numbers that are below what was previously anticipated in the utilization report for 2016.

Comprehensive Maintenance Plan

The City Schools Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP), updated annually in the fall, outlines the process for providing properly maintained education facilities and identifies goals and objectives of the maintenance program. These goals include maintaining a healthy, safe, and positive learning environment; maximizing the useful life of the buildings; reducing emergency school closings; operating cost-effectively with a focus on energy conservation; decreasing and preventing vandalism, accidents, fires and other safety and security issues, and leveraging the CIP to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance and perform life-cycle replacements of major building components.

This CEFMP, reviewed and approved by the Board of School Commissioners at its June 13, 2017 meeting, also serves as a blueprint for the school system's fiscal year 2017 capital budget.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2017 CEFMP

Enrollment Projection Assumptions

Enrollment trends are driven by many factors, including parents' preference for various academic settings, residential mobility, births, and capture rates. School-level enrollment projections are important for long-range facility master planning. Projections, provided at the District level and for each school, inform Building Plan amendments and provide justification for projections included in the CIP request or Maryland Stadium Authority funded projects. Beginning in 2016 the projected enrollment for kindergarten was calculated using both the projected number of births in the city and a revised method to determine the capture rate – the ratio of kindergarten enrollments to city births. This change in methodology, combined with an increase in the number of students in privately-owned charter buildings, resulted in a lower public school buildings utilization rate. SY 2016-17 is the second consecutive year of decreasing student enrollment, leading to a lower projection. The Portfolio Review process has started early this year to identify potential changes in order to meet the agreed-upon utilization rate by the selected date.

At the same time, it is expected that district policies and initiatives proposed and currently underway to retain and increase student enrollment will begin to show a positive impact in SY 2020-21. These include: expansion of PK offerings; strategic placement of middle grade programming, leveraging the capabilities of new buildings; an enrollment initiative in partnership with Mayor Pugh; and efforts to re-engage students not regularly attending school.

Expanded Community Indicator Analysis

In order to determine whether City Schools' programs, facilities, and investments are distributed equitably, Facilities Planning is developing a "Community Equity Index" – a composite index of socioeconomic indicators to categorize communities based on three areas of equity: economic disparity, access to resources, and neighborhood stability and safety. City Schools has compiled the information and is refining the index in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges in the communities where students live and attend school.

Academic Programmatic Movement

A number of special education program classes were relocated for SY 2017-18 due to school closures associated with the 21st Century Buildings Plan or due to fluctuating utilization rates within the program. The goal of academic movement was to align programs so that students have access to programs and so that resources are best utilized.

Portfolio Decisions to Support Utilization Rates

City Schools' Board of Commissioners actions on December 13, 2016 – including approving school closures, surplus properties school reconfigurations, operator renewals, and Buildings Plan amendments – made progress towards meeting utilization targets.

CMMS and Facility Assessments

A new Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) will provide City Schools the ability to input buildings data into a computerized system that will accurately measure and manage building maintenance progress and improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For any City Schools facility undergoing significant changes, the Department of Planning encourages City Schools to meet with Planning staff at the beginning of the process in order to help inform key decisions, through feedback about issues such as surrounding land use opportunities and site constraints. This will increase the likelihood that the project will enhance the community-school connection and have long-lasting positive impacts for both.
- We concur with the CEFMP that school-level enrollment is important to long-range facility master planning. As the 21st Century School Building Plan progresses, the Department of Planning encourages stronger coordination between facilities and academic planning, especially taking into account how previous renovated schools are utilized. For example, we observe that Carver and Dunbar High Schools, which have each had over \$30 million in renovation in the last eight years, are extremely under-enrolled. According to the 2017 CEFMP, Carver's utilization rate is 59% and Dunbar's is 65%. With three high schools scheduled for modernization in Phase 1 of the 21st Century Buildings Program, it becomes critical that our students are using these buildings.
- A Rezoning Feasibility Study that will provide recommendations for approaches City Schools can pursue for comprehensive rezoning is underway. A comprehensive review of school zone lines for PK-5th grade schools has not been done for over twenty years

and city population has changed dramatically in that time. The Department of Planning supports City Schools' seeking recommendations for rezoning so that they are based on population and walkability.

- Department of Planning recommends that the community space that is part of each of the 21st Century School buildings be designed to afford as much flexibility as possible. While siting of the community-accessible space is important to maintain security of the school, the programming of the space will likely change over the long period of time that the school building is in service. Flexibly-designed space will allow for this natural change in programming needs.
- The Department of Planning recommends that City Schools, Planning, and others work together to ensure community use of important public resources such as education and rec space in the schools, and schoolyards, playgrounds, and sport fields, outside of school hours.

Notification: Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, and partners of the INSPIRE school neighborhood planning program have been notified of this action.



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