



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Prince George's County Planning Department
Community Planning Division

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
www.pgplanning.org

301-952-3972

June 8, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Prince George's County Planning Board

VIA: Suzann King, Acting Planning Director *smk*
Derick Berlage, AICP, Acting Deputy Planning Director *DB*
Tony Felts, AICP, Chief, Community Planning Division *TF*

FROM: Lynda Ramirez-Blust, Planner II, MPS, Community Planning Division *LRB*

SUBJECT: **Request for Priority Funding Area (PFA) Designation of 5 Parcels within Brandywine**

PROPOSAL

Staff recommends the Prince George's County Council and the County Executive request that the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) add several properties within Brandywine to the Prince George's County Priority Funding Area (PFA).

The subject properties are not currently located within the State of Maryland's PFA and could benefit greatly from their inclusion by allowing access to a variety of state funding programs to meet the goals of Plan 2035 and the *2013 Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan*.

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), in partnership with the State Interagency Commission and Maryland Stadium Authority, proposes the construction of a new K-8 school facility at 8000 Dyson Road, Brandywine, MD, the current site of Gwynn Park Middle School (Tax Accounts 1136050 and 1136035). This site is not currently within the PFA. To provide funding for the design, construction, and ongoing maintenance of the new school, as well as any future state growth-related infrastructure projects, the state requires the properties be in a Priority Funding Area (PFA), or a waiver be granted [COMAR 14.39.02.03(C)]. The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) recommends the County add the school site to the PFA to facilitate PGCPS efforts to secure funding for the school project. While evaluating this recommendation, staff identified additional adjacent areas to be incorporated into the PFA.

BACKGROUND

The Smart Growth Priority Funding Area Act of 1997 was originally passed as Senate Bill 389. It may now be found in the Md. Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement §5-7B-01, et seq. (Subtitle 7B "Priority Funding Areas"). It was enacted to influence state expenditures on economic growth and development related infrastructure by directing state funding to designated Priority Funding Areas.

The legislation permits counties to include areas beyond the pre-defined areas as "County Designated Smart Growth Areas" if those areas meet the criteria within specific PFA categories (§5-7B-

03). Any request to change the PFA boundaries under these requirements is made in a joint signature letter from the Chair of the County Council and the County Executive to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP).

The original request to establish the county designated Priority Funding Area was incorporated into an October 5, 1998 letter to Ronald M. Kreitner, Director of the Maryland Office of Planning, from Ronald V. Russell, Chairman of the County Council, and Wayne K. Curry, County Executive. The MDP accepted this PFA designation in March 1999. There have been several changes to the original boundary to date.

PFA CATEGORY AND CRITERIA – SCHOOL SITES

The Smart Growth Act identified specific PFA categories with criteria to determine which properties are eligible for designation as a PFA (§5-7B-03). Maryland Department of Planning interprets school sites to be “areas used for employment”.

§5-7B-03(c) states the criteria for Areas Principally Used for Employment are (i) the area is served by public or community sewer systems; or (ii) public or community sewer systems are planned in the approved 10-year water and sewer plan. If the principal use is established after January 1, 1997, then it must also be within a locally designated growth area.

Additionally, §5-7B-03(g) states the designation by a county shall be based on (1) an analysis of the capacity of land areas available for development, including in-fill and redevelopment; and (2) an analysis of the land area needed to satisfy demand for development at densities consistent with the master plan. In practice, this is referred to as a supply/demand analysis. Maryland Department of Planning indicates that this provision is not applicable in this circumstance because the proposed new school is a recognized infrastructure need and not private development.

Gwynn Park Middle School

Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS), in partnership with the State Interagency Commission and Maryland Stadium Authority, proposes the construction of a new K-8 school facility at 8000 Dyson Road, Brandywine, MD, the current site of the Gwynn Park Middle School (Tax Accounts 1136050 and 1136035). The new school consolidates two elementary schools (Baden Elementary and Brandywine Elementary) and one middle school (Gwynn Park Middle) into one facility serving grades K-8.

Gwynn Park Middle School (8000 Dyson Rd., Brandywine, MD) is a 20-acre property comprised of two parcels (Tax Accounts 1136035 and 1136050). “The building was originally built in 1968. As of September 2021, it has a capacity of 765 students and a full-time enrollment of 693 students.”¹ The parcels are zoned Residential, Rural (RR). The parcels are served by public or community water and sewer systems (W-3/S-3), are designated as part of the Established Communities by Plan Prince George’s 2035 (Plan 2035, the County’s General Plan, and meet the criteria for PFA designation [§5-7B-03(c)].

¹ K. Dixon Architecture, LLC. (2023). *Blueprint Schools - Phase II - Test-Fits and Site Investigation Study: New Brandywine K-8 School*. p9

Gwynn Park High School

Gwynn Park High School is earmarked for modernization or replacement in the FY23-28 Capital Improvement Program², but no specific plans have been proposed. The site is adjacent to, but not in, the current PFA.

The Gwynn Park High School site (13800 Brandywine Rd, Brandywine, MD) is a 38-acre property comprised of two parcels (Tax Accounts 1136043, 1136019). The building was constructed in 1975. As of September 2021, it had a capacity of 1,208 students and full-time enrollment of 1,035.³ The parcels are zoned Residential, Rural (RR). The parcels are served by public or community water and sewer systems (W-3/S-3) in *Plan 2035* established communities and meet the criteria for PFA designation. [§5-7B-03(c)].

PFA CATEGORY AND CRITERIA - BRANDYWINE PARK & RIDE

The Smart Growth Act identified specific PFA categories with criteria to determine which properties are eligible for designation as a PFA (§5-7B-03). §5-7B-03(d)(1)(ii) provides an area within an existing community to be designated a PFA if it is served by a public or community water system and in that part of the community designated by the local government for residential use or development there is an average density of at least 2.0 units per acre.

The Brandywine Park & Ride site (Tax Account 5716190) is owned by the State of Maryland. The parcel is zoned Residential, Rural (RR) which allows for construction of 2.17 dwelling units per acre. The parcel is designated S-5/W-5 for future community sewer and water systems. Inclusion in the PFA allows the State to fund future projects at the site associated with development of the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit system.

ROADWAYS ADJACENT TO PROPERTIES

Staff recommends inclusion of the right-of-way of roadways adjacent to the affected parcels (described below) in the PFA to increase the potential to secure state funding for bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and other improvements to connect the schools to neighboring communities. Specific roadways are:

- Dyson Road from the eastern edge of the parcel with Tax Account 1136019 to MD 381 (Brandywine Road)

According to the *Test Fits and Site Investigation Study: New Brandywine K-8 School*, access to the current Gwynn Park Middle School (proposed Brandywine K-8) currently consists of three curb cuts along Dyson Road, none of which have traffic lights. There is a central turn lane serving both northeast- and southwest-bound traffic. Sidewalks exist along both sides of Dyson Road; however, some panels need to be replaced and ADA upgrades are required.

Access to Gwynn Park High School includes two curb cuts along Dyson Road. There is no turn lane on this portion of the road and no traffic lights at either curb cut. Sidewalks exist along Dyson Road and are in good condition.

² Prince George's County Public Schools. (2023). *FY2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan Approved*. P. 5-2

³ Prince George's County Public Schools. (2023). *FY2023 Educational Facilities Master Plan Approved*. Appendix Facility Inventory p. 19.

- MD 381 (Brandywine Road) between US 301 (Robert Crain Highway) and MD 5 (Branch Avenue)

Access to Gwynn Park High School consists of one curb cut on MD 381 (Brandywine Road). There is a dedicated bike lane that begins at the curb cut and continues North on Brandywine Road.

- Mattawoman Drive between US 301 (Robert Crain Highway) and the parcel with Tax Account 5716190

Connects the existing PFA with the two sites and the park-and-ride lot.

- MD 5 (Branch Avenue) between northern edge of the parcel with Tax Account 5716190 to existing PFA boundary near the northern edge of the parcel with Tax Account 5591978

Eliminates a PFA gap along MD 5, where future transit service is planned.

- US 301 (Robert Crain Highway) between the existing PFA boundary at the M-NCPPC-owned parcel with Tax Account 3985033 and MD 381 (Brandywine Road)

AFFECTED PARCELS

Address	Tax Account
13800 Brandywine Rd, Brandywine, MD 20613	1136043
13800 Brandywine Rd, Brandywine, MD 20613	1136019
8000 Dyson Rd, Brandywine, MD 20613	1136035
Dyson Rd, Brandywine, MD 20613	1136050
13620 Brandywine Rd, Brandywine, MD 20613	5716190

GENERAL PLAN AND MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Plan 2035

The Plan 2035 Growth Policy Map focuses future development in eight Regional Transit Districts and 26 Local Centers. The proposed school facility serves residents of the Brandywine Local Town Center and nearby neighborhoods within the Established Communities.

2013 Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan

The *2013 Approved Subregion 5 Master Plan* set two policies for school facilities.

- Policy 1: Construct new public schools at locations that are convenient for the populations they serve and require minimal bussing of students.
- Policy 2: Construct and renovate schools in order to operate at 100 percent of capacity or less and to provide a quality, energy efficient learning environment.

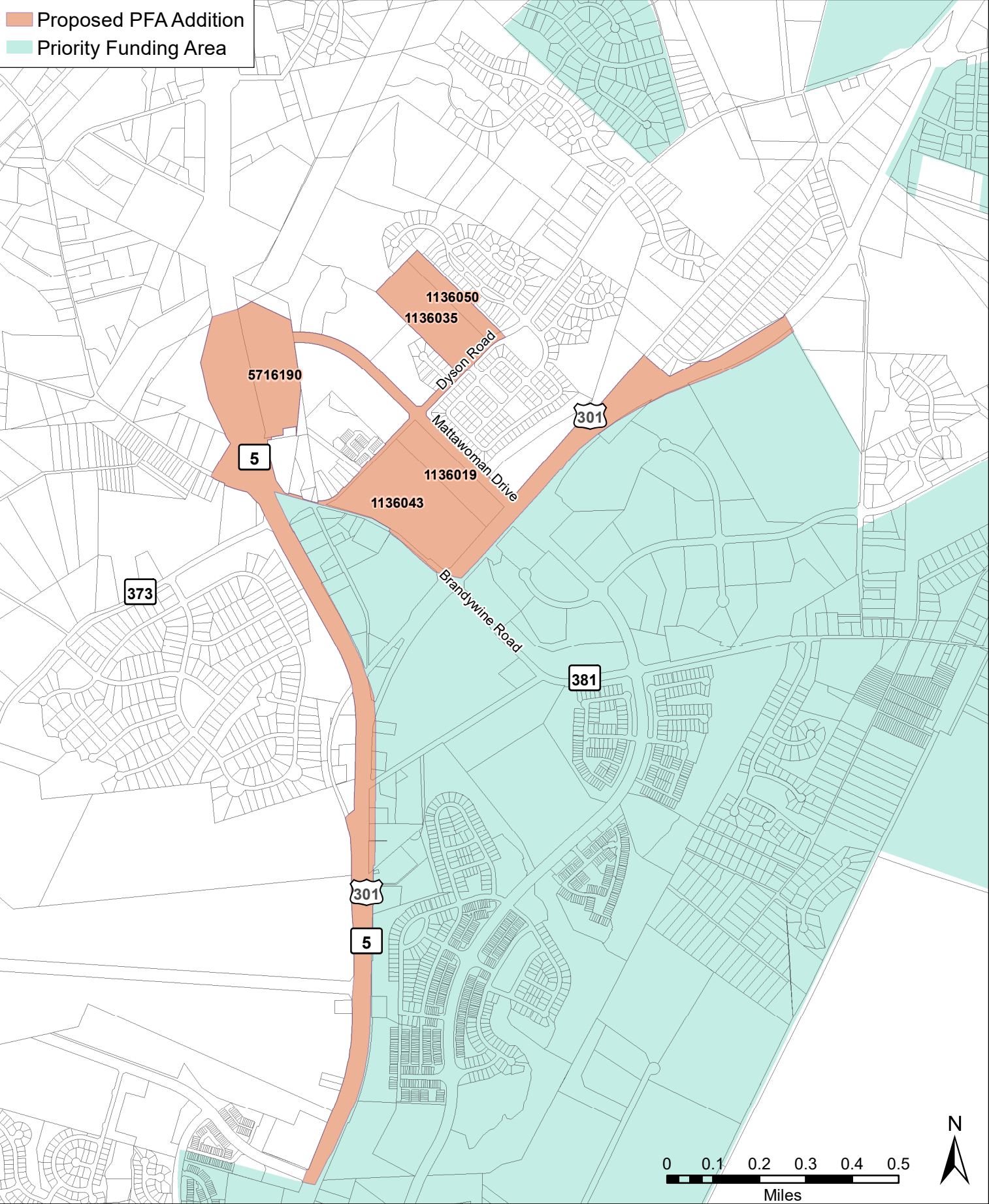
The master plan also acknowledges that the subject park-and-ride facility and the MD 5 Corridor are preferred locations for future transit service as part of the Southern Maryland Regional Transit system.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Board transmit the proposed Priority Funding Area amendment correspondence to the County Council and the County Executive.

Attachments

Proposed PFA Addition
Priority Funding Area



Proposed Priority Funding Area Update May 2023





OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Jason Washington, Director | jason.washington@pgcps.org | 301-780-5929 | Cell: 240-484-9273
Louis Wilson Sr. Facilities Administration Building, Trailer #10 | 13300 Old Marlboro Pike | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

June 2, 2023

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning
Prince George's County Planning Department
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Attn: Suzann King, Acting Planning Director, Prince George's County Planning Department

Subject: Priority Funding Area Designation Change for the New Brandywine K-8 School

Ms. King:

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is currently in an RFP procurement process to select a Developer from three (3) shortlisted firms to design, build, finance and maintain eight (8) schools under a public private partnership (P3) agreement, known as the Blueprint Schools Phase II (Program). Authorized under Maryland, Education, 4-126, Alternative Financing Methods, the P3 is an alternative project delivery method that allows PGCPS to build and deliver a package of schools on an expedited timeline, with staggered delivery date without the use of public funds for capital costs prior to the delivery of the schools. The Program is a partnership between Prince George's County Public Schools, Prince George's County Government, the State Interagency Commission on School Construction and Maryland Stadium Authority. The proposed full development cost of the eight (8) proposed schools is approximately \$700,000,000, with additional services costs associated with facility maintenance for the term of the agreement (30 years). This delivery model allows the County and the State to better align resources to deliver much needed schools quickly while managing available funds.

We were informed by Maryland Department of Planning through the State Clearinghouse process that one of the new schools to be built as part of the program, generically identified as New Area Brandywine K-8 School, to be built on the existing site of Gwynn Park Middle School located at 8000 Dyson Road, Brandywine, MD 20613, is not within the Priority Funding Area. According to COMAR 14.39.02.03 (C), new or increased capacity of an existing school can only occur in a Priority Funding Area (PFA) unless the Local Educational Agency (LEA) pursues a waiver.

The Build to Learn Act, codified under the West's Annotated Code of Maryland, Education, 4-126, Alternative Financing Methods, authorizes us to proceed with the P3 and stipulates that we must enter into an Agreement by July 1, 2024, for the proposed eight (8) schools with a Developer, or forfeit the State's annual contribution of \$27,000,000 for the availability payments for 30 years. In sum, if we are unable to finalize an agreement by this mandated date PGCPS would not be able to proceed with the Program and would lose the opportunity to replace, expand and consolidate school facilities that have exceeded their useful life.

Please advise if there is any additional information needed to justify this request to change the Priority Funding Area designation for the proposed New Brandywine K-8 School and existing Gwynn Park High School.

Sincerely,

Jason Washington
Director