

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

1999 Legislative Session

Resolution No. CR-61-1999

Proposed by Council Member Estep

Introduced by Council Member Estep

Co-Sponsors _____

Date of Introduction November 9, 1999

RESOLUTION

1 A RESOLUTION concerning

2 Public Review and Comment on School Population Projections

3 For the purpose of requesting that the Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital

4 Park and Planning Commission provide a public explanation of the methodology employed to

5 develop five-year school-by-school student population projections in conjunction with the

6 County's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) Test, along with the tasks undertaken by staff from

7 the Planning Department and the Prince George's County Public Schools in developing those

8 projections, and allow for a period of public review and comment on the methodology and the

9 resultant school-by-school five-year student population projections prior to their approval by the

10 Prince George's County Planning Board.

11 WHEREAS, CB-3-1997, as amended by CB-15-1999, established an adequate public

12 facilities test for schools at the time of preliminary plat of subdivision and building permit; and

13 WHEREAS, this test involves calculating the number of elementary, middle, and high

14 school students generated by the proposed subdivision, based on pupil yield factors for each

15 dwelling unit type as determined by the Planning Board; and

16 WHEREAS, this test involves a determination by the Board of Education, based on current

17 school attendance areas, of the current elementary, middle, and high schools serving the property

18 at the time of review of the subdivision; and

19 WHEREAS, this test calls for the development of a five-year enrollment projection for each

20 County public elementary, middle, and high school to be prepared by the Planning Department in

21 cooperation with the Board of Education and other appropriate County and State agencies, and

22 submitted for approval to the Planning Board; and

1 WHEREAS, this test requires that the number of students generated by the proposed
2 subdivision be added to the projected five-year enrollment for the schools that would be affected
3 by the subdivision, as amended by the number of students generated by approved preliminary
4 plats affecting the same schools since the most recent annual enrollment projections; and

5 WHEREAS, this test requires that the total projected number of students for each school
6 affected by the subdivision be compared to the state rated capacity for those schools; and

7 WHEREAS, if the total projected number of students for an affected school exceeds one
8 hundred five percent (105%) of the State Rated Capacity for that school, the applicant for the
9 subdivision may pay an adequate public facilities fee equal to the cost of a permanent seat for
10 each student generated by the subdivision above the one hundred five percent (105%) capacity
11 level; and

12 WHEREAS, if the total five-year projected number of students for an affected school
13 exceeds one hundred thirty percent (130%) of the State Rated Capacity for that school, no
14 permits may be issued for the proposed subdivision until capacity, as measured by the projected
15 number of students compared to the State Rated Capacity, exists below one hundred thirty
16 percent (130%) at all affected schools, or four years have elapsed since the time of the approval
17 of the preliminary plan of subdivision; and

18 WHEREAS, this test may only capture the relationship between the number of students at a
19 school and the capacity of that school occurring through new home construction; and

20 WHEREAS, there are many other factors impacting the relationship between the number of
21 students at a school and the capacity of that school that are unrelated to new home construction;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, these factors include student attendance area boundary changes that are made
24 periodically at the discretion of the Board of Education; and

25 WHEREAS, these factors include changes in the programs offered at a school, such as the
26 creation of a magnet program, the consolidation or decentralization of programs for students for
27 whom English is a second language, or the provision of before and after child care services at a
28 school, that change the patterns of students attending a school outside of the school attendance
29 area in which they live; and

1 WHEREAS, these factors include changes in the programs offered at a school, such as the
2 establishment of a special education program or the conversion of a classroom to a computer lab,
3 music room, or other specialty room, that change the state rated capacity of that school; and

4 WHEREAS, these factors include increases or decreases to individual school student
5 populations relating to patterns of in-migration and out-migration that are unrelated to new home
6 construction; and

7 WHEREAS, these factors include changes in Board of Education policies toward students
8 wishing to transfer to a school outside their normal student attendance area, such changes being
9 made at the discretion of the Board of Education; and

10 WHEREAS, these factors may include other, difficult to quantify factors such as changes in
11 job commuting patterns or changes in geographic patterns for the provision of private child care
12 services; and

13 WHEREAS, the number of children attending a school, or the capacity of a school, may
14 also be impacted by the construction of new school facilities, the renovation of existing school
15 facilities, or the construction of a permanent classroom addition to an individual school; and

16 WHEREAS, the County, in cooperation with the Board of Education, has embarked on an
17 ambitious school construction program; and

18 WHEREAS, a stated goal of this program is to construct twenty-six (26) schools in Prince
19 George's County; and

20 WHEREAS, thirteen (13) of these schools were identified in a formal Memorandum of
21 Understanding mutually agreed to by the County government and the Board of Education; and

22 WHEREAS, the location of many of the second group of thirteen (13) new schools not
23 specifically enumerated in the Memorandum of Understanding are undetermined at this time;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, the five-year student population projections prepared for approval by the
26 Planning Board will assist the County government and the Board of Education in targeting where
27 these additional schools are most needed; and

28 WHEREAS, as a result, the creation of five-year student population projections is critical
29 not only to the County's development review process but also to the County's capital
30 improvement program process; and

1 WHEREAS, the Planning Board will consider in December 1999 updated student
2 population and capacity projections; and

3 WHEREAS, such projections will be the third set of projections developed as a result of the
4 enactment of CB-3-1997, as amended; and

5 WHEREAS, in the first year of the APF test process, the Planning Department undertook
6 the task of developing the five-year student population projections; and

7 WHEREAS, the Planning Department based these projections on the dwelling unit
8 forecasts sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; and

9 WHEREAS, under this forecast, County dwelling unit totals were established based on
10 analysis of past trends, outstanding building permits, recorded lots, preliminary subdivisions, and
11 the County's regional share of dwelling units; and

12 WHEREAS, based on two random sample surveys in each of the seven planning subregions
13 in the County, the Planning Department developed subregion-specific pupil yield factors for
14 single family, townhouse, multi-family and condominium housing types; and

15 WHEREAS, the Planning Department applied these pupil yield factors to the dwelling unit
16 forecast to establish the total number of elementary, middle, and high school students in public
17 schools in the County; and

18 WHEREAS, in assigning children to individual schools, the Planning Department made the
19 assumption that the distribution of students in the system would essentially be the same for the
20 fifth year of the projection as it was for the current year; and

21 WHEREAS, the Planning Department concluded from these efforts that the County's
22 public school system could perform the function of allocating students to individual schools
23 more effectively based on its historical knowledge of student assignment patterns; and

24 WHEREAS, as a result, the Planning Department agreed to work cooperatively with the
25 County school system in developing the five-year student population projection in the second
26 year of the APF test process; and

27 WHEREAS, Planning Department staff explained to school system staff their methodology
28 for projecting the total number of students at the elementary, middle, and high school level; and

29 WHEREAS, school system staff explained their projection methods; and

30 WHEREAS, the school system's method of projection is based on cohort survival and
31 grade succession; and

1 WHEREAS, cohort survival studies, on a school-by-school basis, historical patterns
2 relating to the number of students in a grade versus the number of students in the subsequent
3 grade in the subsequent year; and

4 WHEREAS, cohort survival also relies on historical statistics and trend projections
5 provided by the Maryland Office of Planning to project the number of kindergarten students
6 entering the system in a given year; and

7 WHEREAS, cohort survival is a projection methodology employed by most school systems
8 in the State of Maryland; and

9 WHEREAS, the cohort survival method only indirectly accounts for growth through new
10 housing construction to the extent it may capture historical trends in grade succession
11 calculations; and

12 WHEREAS, the cohort survival method does not directly account for outstanding building
13 permits, recorded lots, and preliminary subdivisions; and

14 WHEREAS, as a result, Planning Department and school system staff agreed that the
15 Planning Department's method of projecting system-wide total elementary, middle and high
16 school enrollment for five years into the future was a better projection tool than the cohort
17 survival method employed by the school system; and

18 WHEREAS, Planning Department and school system staff agreed that the school system
19 could provide a more accurate distribution of projected students on a school-by-school basis; and

20 WHEREAS, as a result, the Planning Department developed the five-year projection for the
21 total number of elementary, middle, and high school students, and the school system allocated
22 those students to individual schools; and

23 WHEREAS, at the request of the Executive Director of the Maryland Interagency
24 Committee for Public School Construction (IAC), an outside consultant was retained by the
25 Planning Department to make an independent projection of system-wide elementary, middle and
26 high school pupils; and

27 WHEREAS, the results of that projection more closely correlate to the Planning
28 Department's projections than those of the Prince George's Public Schools; and

29 WHEREAS, the IAC Executive Director had indicated to the Planning Department that, as
30 long as the results of the Department's five-year projections do not deviate substantially from

1 five-year projections developed by the Maryland Office of Planning utilizing cohort survival, the
2 IAC would accept the Planning Department's total population projections; and

3 WHEREAS, Planning Department staff, working in conjunction with school system staff,
4 are currently working to further refine the existing methodology based on a greater
5 understanding of relevant factors affecting student population changes; and

6 WHEREAS, improving the current methodology requires the coordination of efforts
7 between Planning Department staff and school system staff; and

8 WHEREAS, school population projections are of growing public interest; and

9 WHEREAS, the heightened awareness of the importance of these projections to the
10 County's development review process, the County's capital improvement program process, and
11 school system planning needs, has resulted in an initiative by the Superintendent of Schools to
12 conduct an audit of the school system's methods of projecting student populations on a school-
13 by-school basis; and

14 WHEREAS, there is a benefit to be gained from including citizen input into the process of
15 refining the current projection methodology; and

16 WHEREAS, this refinement process requires a full and detailed explanation so that staff
17 and stakeholders alike understand the methodology used to project student populations as well as
18 all of the relevant factors that may impact future population trends on a school-by-school basis;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Prince George's
20 County, Maryland, that for the next cycle of school population projections as required by CB-3-
21 1997, as amended, the Planning Department create a process for public review and comment on
22 the school-by-school population projections, and the methodology used to develop these
23 projections, prior to the formal endorsement of these projections by the Prince George's County
24 Planning Board.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Department provide a public explanation
26 of the methodology used in developing these projections at the time the projections are first
27 presented to the Planning Board.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Department consider and undertake the
29 publication of a citizen's guide to this process to provide a greater understanding for citizens on
30 the process and the methodology employed in student population forecasting, as well as the

1 specific responsibilities undertaken by the Planning Department and the County's public school
2 system, in developing the five-year projections.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Department and Prince George's Public
4 Schools be prepared, at the time the projections are first presented to the Planning Board, to
5 explain in detail any circumstances under which the projected number of students at a given
6 school has changed dramatically from the previous year's five-year projection.

Adopted this 9th day of November, 1999.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE
GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: _____
M. H. Jim Estepp
Chairman

ATTEST:

Joyce T. Sweeney
Clerk of the Council