

Office of the Superintendent of Schools  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rockville, Maryland

September 9, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of School

Subject: Montgomery County Planning Board Mandatory Referral—Northwood High School Addition/Facility Upgrades Project (07-15-2021-04)

During the Board of Education Meeting discussion, Board members requested the following information:

**Question**

During the *Montgomery County Planning Board Mandatory Referral—Northwood High School Addition/Facility Upgrades Project* discussion, Mrs. Smondrowski requested information regarding contacting the Planning Board concerning Montgomery County Public Schools having an expanded role in the decision making for projects that affect the school system.

**Response**

The Master Planning Process that is implemented by the Montgomery County Planning office provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of publicly- and privately-owned land. Each plan reflects a vision of the future that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective. This vision is developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department in consultation with community members through public meetings and outreach tools.

Public outreach and community feedback typically occur prior to the release of the Working Draft, but could follow afterward. Historically, the Board of Education input and feedback has been viewed in the context of public testimony. This testimony may occur during the following process steps:

- **Working Draft**  
The Working Draft is the first publicly available version of a plan and can be accessed online. The draft is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Department for presentation to the five members of the Montgomery County Planning Board (Planning Board). The Planning Board reviews the Working Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes, as appropriate, and approves the plan for a public hearing. After the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

- **Public Hearing Draft**

The Public Hearing Draft is the formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public testimony at a public hearing held by the Planning Board. After this hearing, the Planning Board holds public work sessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan, as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

- **Planning Board Draft**

The Planning Board Draft is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and reflects its revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The *Regional District Act* requires the Planning Board to transmit a master plan, sector plan, or functional plan to the Montgomery County Council with copies to the county executive who must, within 60 days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The county executive may also forward other comments and recommendations to the County Council.

- **County Council Public Hearing**

The County Council holds a Public Hearing to receive public testimony on the Planning Board Draft. After the hearing record is closed, the relevant County Council committee holds public work sessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The full County Council holds work sessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft, as revised.

The final steps in the process are approval and adoption. After Council approval, the Plan is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for adoption. Once adopted by the M-NCPPC, the Plan officially amends the master plans, sector plans, and functional plans cited in the M-NCPPC adopted resolution.

It strongly is recommended to begin conversations with both the Planning Board and County Council to insert a step in the current process for review and comment of the Board of Education for pending master plans, sector plans, and functional plans. This step is recommended to occur *prior* to the final vote of the Planning Board Draft.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Eugenia S. Dawson, chief of finance and operations, at 240-740-3050, or via email or Mr. Seth P Adams, director, Department of Facilities Management, Office of Finance and Operations, at 240-314-1000, or via email

MBM:ESD:SPA:imt

Copy to:

Ms. Dawson  
Mr. Adams  
Ms. Webb