

Introduced by: Councilmember Smith

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

Resolution 2018-15

Resolution Requesting that the Montgomery County Public Schools Consider a New School Site in the Takoma Park Area

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools convened a committee to review and recommend sites for a new elementary school in the Downcounty Consortium area to alleviate overcrowding in the schools; and

WHEREAS, the Committee recommended Forest Grove Elementary School, 9805 Dameron Drive, Silver Spring, as the first choice for a new elementary school, and MacDonald Knolls Elementary School, 10611 Tenbrook Drive, Silver Spring, as the second choice, both locations outside the Beltway; and

WHEREAS, no sites within the City of Takoma Park were included as finalists for a new school, despite the growth in the City's school age population; and

WHEREAS, MCPS's past school enrollment projections have significantly under-estimated student population growth in this area and, with the coming of the Purple Line and the zoning changes in the Takoma Langley Crossroads and New Hampshire Avenue Corridor, an increased demand for housing for families is expected; and

WHEREAS, public elementary school students from Takoma Park primarily attend Takoma Park Elementary School, Piney Branch Elementary School or Rolling Terrace Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, the proposed expansions of Piney Branch Elementary School (on the smallest MCPS school parcel) and East Silver Spring Elementary School will not be sufficient to fully address the need for elementary school space in the Takoma Park area; and

WHEREAS, MCPS's criteria for site selection undervalued important factors such as walkability; operational costs of busing; and impact on sustainability efforts, as well as the impact on a large number of non-white students, with 73 percent of the students at Takoma Park Elementary, Piney Branch Elementary, and Rolling Terrace Elementary being students of color; and

WHEREAS, MCPS and Montgomery County do not have a process in place for siting new schools when no available site is identified in a Master Plan, nor does MCPS have criteria established to address the use of park land and open spaces for school sites and requirements for replacement of those lands; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County could deny approval of proposed developments if a location does not have Adequate Public Facilities, including school capacity, thereby limiting the redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor, which is a

transit-oriented area and the redevelopment of which is a long-standing goal of the City and County established with the Council adoption of the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan in 2008 and the Montgomery County Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the City of Takoma Park requests that Montgomery County Public Schools locate a new school in or near Takoma Park to accommodate the growing population of school age children.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT MCPS and Montgomery County should continue to allocate the funds required for the expansion of Piney Branch Elementary School which is necessary to partially accommodate the growing population of school age children.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, in addition to other nearby sites, MCPS study the feasibility of using the Washington Adventist Hospital campus, which meets the criteria for school site selection, for the location of a new school. The City has recently learned new information regarding the timing and availability of the Hospital campus, which will be vacated in 2019.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park [or City Council] requests that MCPS and Montgomery County develop a process for siting new schools when no available site is identified in a Master Plan, as well as develop criteria to guide the use of parkland and open space for schools, determining when and under what considerations the use of parkland is acceptable for a school site and specifying the replacement requirements. Privately owned land should be given serious consideration, especially in dense Downcounty locations, with both the short-term costs of land purchase and the long-term costs of busing students weighed into decisions. Walkability, sustainability, racial equity, and the development of strong community schools should be important factors in decision-making about school sites.

Adopted this 7th day of March, 2018.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk