

REVIEW OF MCPS'S FY27-32 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP) – BOARD OF EDUCATION'S REQUEST VS. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S RECOMMENDATION



Description

This is an annual review of MCPS's Capital Improvements Program, mainly focusing on a comparison between the County Executive's recommendation and the Board of Education's request, and potential implications that the difference may have on any individual school project or major capital project included in the requested FY27-32 CIP.

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SUMMARY

- The Board of Education’s request for MCPS’s FY27-32 Capital Improvements Program totals \$2.79 billion over the six-year period. The County Executive recommended a total of \$2.14 billion for MCPS, which is \$380 million more than the previous six-year total of the amended FY25-30 CIP, but still \$652.3 million short of the Board of Ed’s request.
- The County Executive is recommending some specific reductions to the Board of Education’s request, as well as an undesignated ‘Affordability Reconciliation’ that will have to be resolved during the Council’s CIP reconciliation process. MCPS will provide a list of ‘non-recommended reductions’ from which additional cuts and deferrals from the requested CIP are expected.
- Montgomery Planning staff did a high level review of the new projects added in the Board of Education’s requested CIP, and is providing comments related to site design considerations so MCPS can take them into account early in the CIP process. Planning staff recommends that these comments be transmitted to the Council.

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INTRODUCTION

In November of 2025, the Board of Education requested a FY 2027-2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) totaling \$2.79 billion. On January 15, 2026, the County Executive announced his Recommended FY27-32 CIP, which includes \$2.14 billion for the MCPS CIP.

The Board of Education’s Requested CIP can be found at:

https://gis.mcpsmd.org/cipmasterpdfs/CIP27_BOECIP.pdf

The County Executive’s Recommended CIP can be found at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OMB/Resources/Files/omb/pdfs/fy27/ciprec/MontgomeryCountyPublicSchools.pdf>

In this report, Planning staff provides an overview of the Board of Education (BOE)’s requested FY27-32 MCPS CIP in comparison to the County Executive’s recommendation, and a summary of individual school projects and major capital projects included in the request. Also included are preliminary Planning staff comments on site design considerations for the individual school or major capital projects newly added in the CIP that would be subject to the Planning Board’s mandatory referral process (see Attachment A).

Planning staff recommends that the Planning Board transmit the comments to the County Council for review by the Education and Culture Committee (E&C) and MCPS during their upcoming CIP work sessions.

BOARD OF EDUCATION’S REQUESTED FY27-32 MCPS CIP vs. COUNTY EXECUTIVE’S RECOMMENDATION

At the beginning of the current fiscal year’s capital planning process, MCPS’s Superintendent notified the Board of Education that the school system is making a deliberate shift from its previous ‘reactive, enrollment-driven construction’ approach towards ‘a capital investment plan that prioritizes infrastructure and facility renewal’. The Superintendent also stated that to reach a point of doing the number of replacement and upgrade projects necessary would require a six-year request of more than \$5 billion.

For the FY27-32 CIP, the Board of Education requested a total of \$2.79 billion for MCPS. While this only reflects a fraction of the Superintendent’s stated need, it is \$1.03 billion (or 58.8%) more than the 6-year total of the amended FY25-30 CIP. The County Executive, on the other hand, recommended a total of \$2.14 billion for MCPS over the six-year period. This is \$380 million more than the previous six-year total of the amended FY25-30 CIP but falls \$652.3 million short of the Board of Education’s request.

The following table and graph present the Board of Education’s requested FY27-32 CIP for MCPS and the County Executive’s recommendation in comparison to the amended FY25-30 CIP year by year (the amended FY25 and FY26 budgets are not shown but included in the 6-yr total).

Table 1 MCPS FY27-32 CIP Comparison Table (in millions)

	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32	Six-Yr Total
FY25-30 Amended	\$ 333.3	\$ 247.2	\$ 223.6	\$ 291.8	-	-	\$ 1,755.5
FY27-32 BOE Request	\$ 417.1	\$ 423.7	\$ 518.4	\$ 600.5	\$ 530.7	\$ 297.4	\$ 2,787.9
<i>diff. from amended</i>	\$ 83.8 25.1%	\$ 176.5 71.4%	\$ 294.9 131.9%	\$ 308.7 105.8%	-	-	\$ 1,032.4 58.8%
FY27-32 CE Rec.	\$ 384.6	\$ 339.5	\$ 273.2	\$ 399.2	\$ 379.6	\$ 359.5	\$ 2,135.5
<i>diff. from amended</i>	\$ 51.3 15.4%	\$ 92.3 37.3%	\$ 49.6 22.2%	\$ 107.3 36.8%	-	-	\$ 380.0 21.6%
<i>diff. from BoE's Req.</i>	\$ (32.5) -7.8%	\$ (84.3) -19.9%	\$ (245.2) -47.3%	\$ (201.3) -33.5%	\$ (151.1) -28.5%	\$ 62.1 20.9%	\$ (652.3) -23.4%

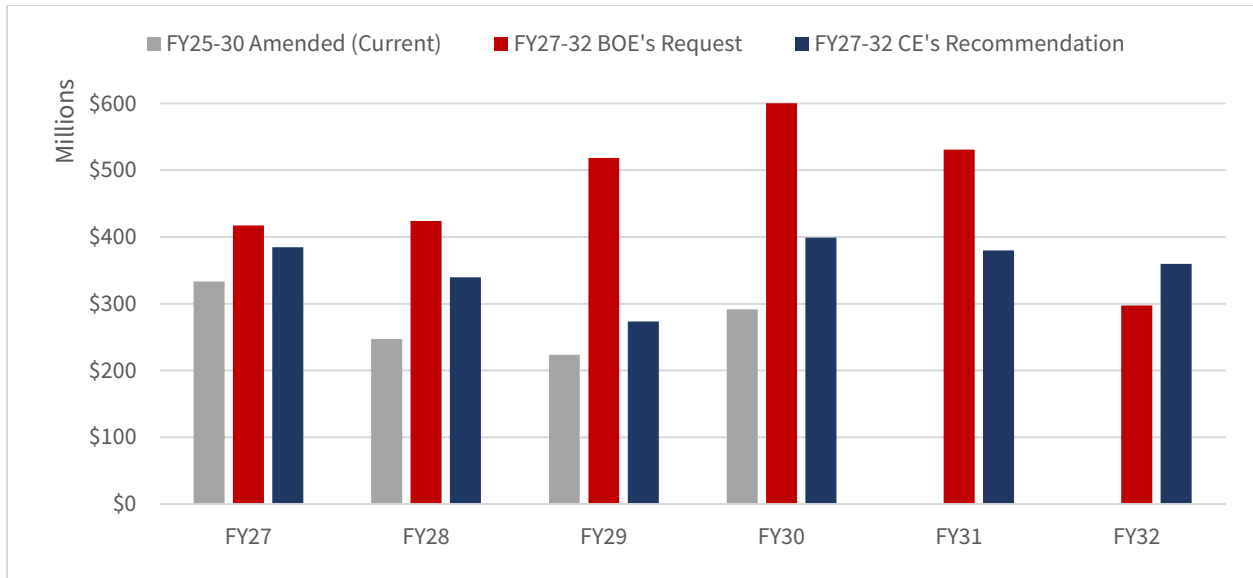


Figure 1 MCPS FY27-32 CIP Comparison - BOE Request vs. CE Recommendation

The County Executive is recommending some specific reductions to the Board of Education’s request, as well as an undesignated ‘Affordability Reconciliation’, which indicates that there is still a gap between the remaining CIP request and recommended funding level that will have to be resolved during the Council’s CIP reconciliation process.

This ‘Affordability Reconciliation’ totals \$156.1 million across the six-year CIP period, but the amount is much higher in the first four years of the CIP, at \$497 million, because the County Executive’s recommendation allocates funds above the Board of Education’s request for FY31 and FY32. The first four years of the CIP are when funding for projects already underway or ready to break ground is most urgent. Therefore, additional cuts and deferrals from the requested CIP are expected. As has been done in previous years, MCPS will provide a list of ‘non-recommended reductions’, and in late February or early March, the Council’s E&C Committee will review and discuss how best to prioritize restoring non-recommended projects in case additional funding becomes available during the whole CIP reconciliation process in mid-May.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL & MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS IN MCPS’S FY27-32 CIP

The Board of Education’s requested CIP includes the following 13 individual school or major capital projects (the year listed in parentheses indicate the proposed completion date).

Projects that are already in construction stage:

- Burtonsville ES Replacement (2026)
- JoAnn Leleck ES Replacement (2026)
- Crown HS (2027)
- Northwood HS Addition/Upgrade (2027)

- Woodward HS (2027)

Projects that have been approved but are not under construction:

- Cold Spring ES Major Capital Project (2031)
- Eastern MS Major Capital Project (2030)
- Damascus HS Major Capital Project (2031)

New projects that are added to the CIP:

- Sligo Creek ES Replacement (2029)
- Burning Tree ES Major Capital Project (2031)
- Highland View ES Major Capital Project (2031)
- Piney Branch ES Major Capital Project (2031)
- Sligo MS Major Capital Project (2031)

The County Executive, however, does not support the following:

- Sligo Creek ES Replacement project: the recommendation is to wait until the countywide elementary school boundary study (tentatively scheduled to start in 2026 and take two years) is completed, so options to balance enrollment across the system can be considered comprehensively.
- Capacity increase at Eastern MS: the recommendation is for a partial reduction of the project's total funds, so the project will remain, but without increasing capacity.
- Sligo MS Major Capital Project: the stated reason for the reduction is the capacity increase, but the recommendation excludes funding for the entire project, not only the additional seats. In reality, MCPS will likely need a middle school holding center to be able to proceed with this project, and many other secondary schools that may be in need of major facility upgrades in the future.

MCPS is conducting two boundary studies at the middle school and high school level that will take effect in the 2027-2028 school year with the completion of the Crown, Northwood, and Woodward HS projects. The Board of Education will make final decisions on new boundaries for the affected middle and high schools on March 26. The Superintendent's recommended boundary options, which were presented to the Board of Education on February 5, currently assume the County Executive's recommended reduction for the Eastern and Sligo MS projects. It also assumes relocating Wootton HS to the newly built Crown site instead of opening it as an additional high school. The Superintendent's recommended boundary options can be found in Attachment B.

PLANNING STAFF COMMENTS ON SITE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW PROJECTS

In light of the Planning Process MOU (adopted in November 2023, see Attachment C) that highlights areas for enhanced collaboration with MCPS, Planning and Parks staff conducted a high level review

of the Burning Tree ES, Highland View ES, and Eastern MS sites and compiled a list of preliminary comments related to site design that should be taken into account by MCPS early in the CIP process (see Attachment A). The comments reflect Planning’s overall perspective on capital investment in schools as an opportunity to advance the county’s Vision Zero goals, achieve Climate Action Plan targets, and help implement key planning concepts of Compact Growth, Complete Communities, and Design Excellence identified as priorities within Thrive 2050.

These comments, along with comments for schools that have been transmitted previously but may still be applicable to projects still in their early planning and design stages, are attached to this report for transmittal to the County Council. While these are not considered official comments as part of the mandatory referral process, the intent in providing them is to enable Planning and Parks’ constructive input to be reflected in MCPS’s capital planning process early and ensure that adequate funding can be considered for elements that may have budgetary implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning staff recommends that the Board endorse the comments included in Attachment A to be transmitted to the County Council for review by the Education and Culture Committee (E&C) and MCPS during the school CIP discussions.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Montgomery Planning Staff Comments on Individual School Capital Projects in the Board of Education’s Request of MCPS’ FY25-30 Capital Improvement Program

Attachment B – Superintendent’s Recommended Boundary Options for the ‘Reopening of Woodward HS and Expansion of Northwood HS’ and ‘Relocation of Wootton HS and Expansion of Damascus HS’

Attachment C – Planning Process MOU