

## Fairfax County Public Schools – Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Public Hearing

Planned Remarks by Mr. Fadi Shadid, Co-chair, Special Committee on Schools, Great Falls Citizens Association

January 7, 2020 at Luther Jackson Middle School

Madam Chair and School Board Members,

My name is Fadi Shadid and I have three children in Fairfax County Public Schools. I'm also a volunteer on the schools committee with the Great Falls Citizens Association. Our association has about one thousand members.

First, I want to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this very complex and important CIP process. We all agree that we owe it to our students and communities to employ our best information sources and data insight as basis for these major planning decisions.

The community I represent is concerned about the membership forecast for Langley High School in the proposed Fiscal Year 21-25 CIP. We are concerned that the membership forecast may be too low and is underestimating student enrollment at Langley HS over the next five years. The new CIP expects membership to decline 8.0% to 1,855 students after five years. For reasons I will cite shortly, we think it is more reasonable to forecast at least a flat or slightly rising enrollment over the next five years. We believe that a flat growth profile is consistent with experience of the past ten years, while a slightly rising forecast is supported from the uptrend of the past five years as well as the general high growth profile of our county.

The primary reason we think your forecast is too low is that that the CIP has been forecasting a declining trajectory for Langley in every single annual CIP for the past ten years (Figure 1). The average decline forecasted from the past ten CIP's is 6.4%, in year five as compared to year one of the forecast period. Yet, actual membership has stayed flat and has not declined from ten years ago (Figure 2). In 2010, the enrollment was at 2,018 students. For September 2020, the membership forecast is expecting 2,016 students i.e., no decline. Also, the forecast for this coming September would be the highest enrollment in the past five years. These facts do not suggest a declining trend.

**Figure 1. Langley HS Projected Membership for Year 1 and Year 5 by Year of Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**

CIP	Projected Membership - Year 1	Projected Membership - Year 5	Change
FY11-2015	2,013	1,922	-4.5%
FY12-2016	2,056	2,012	-2.1%
FY13-2017	1,975	1,942	-1.7%
FY14-2018	1,974	1,770	-10.3%
FY15-2019	1,943	1,728	-11.1%
FY16-2020	1,960	1,889	-3.6%
FY17-2021	1,966	1,747	-11.1%
FY18-2022	1,912	1,699	-11.1%
FY19-2023	1,959	1,859	-5.1%
FY20-2024	1,922	1,861	-3.2%
<b>Average - 10 Year</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>1,843</b>	<b>-6.4%</b>
<b>FY21-2025 Proposed</b>	<b>2,016</b>	<b>1,855</b>	<b>-8.0%</b>

Source: [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) Documents](#)

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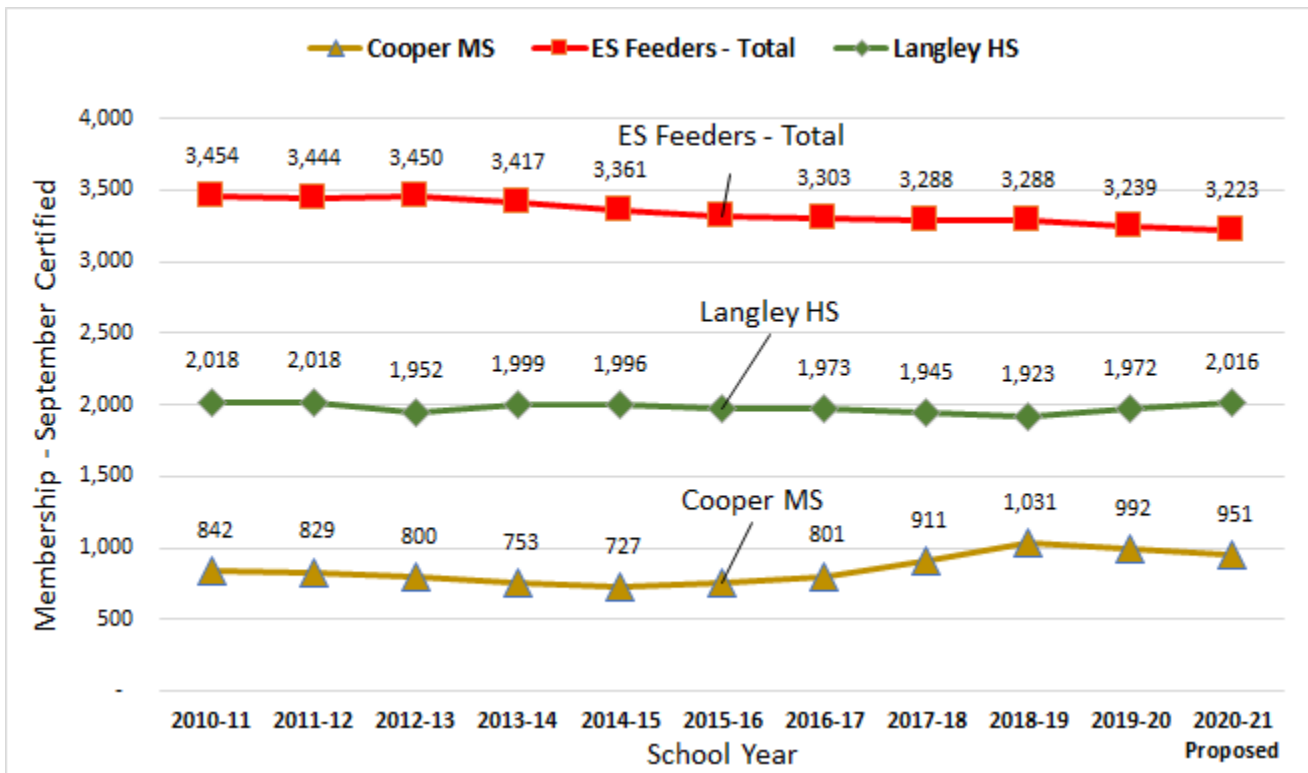
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We realize that the CIP forecast is based on input variables in a computer model. In the case of Langley, it may be that the slightly declining trend in Elementary School membership (Figure 2) or another model variable is overly dampening the Langley enrollment forecast. We are suggesting that, whatever variables are responsible for this repeated declining forecast, they have not been accurate. Something else is happening and causing Langley HS membership to stay about the same despite the model forecast.

We are concerned that if this underestimation of student enrollment persists, it will eventually jeopardize program and resource planning. More immediately, inaccurate assumptions may be used as basis for the boundary adjustment under consideration with McLean HS.

We recommend that you address our concerns and redo the proposed membership forecast for Langley HS. Again, we think the current proposed 8% decline in year five of the forecast is a significant underestimation as were the last ten forecasts. We think you should consider a flat or slightly rising drift over the next five years that we think is more consistent with the data and developments in our community.

Figure 2. Langley School Pyramid Membership (Student Enrollment) – 10 Year Trends & 2020-21 Forecast



ES Feeder Schools: Churchill Road, Forestville, Great Falls, Spring Hill, Franklin Sherman

Source: Appendix, Capital Improvement Program FY 2021-25 (DRAFT)

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Supplemental Comments (not part of the delivered remarks):

We are also seeing developments that likely will yield more students from the existing communities. There are at least two hundred new single-family homes under construction in the Langley Pyramid. These are all “by-right” developments that we understand is not factored in the CIP forecast such as the Toll Brothers development south of Route 7, with over 120 homes. At a student yield ratio of 0.53 or higher, that amounts to at least 100 students. While the absolute number is not significant given the 6,000+ students in the Langley Pyramid, it none the less supports a growth profile and not a decline in household formations and student yields. Realtors in our community are increasingly reporting new families moving from Arlington and Alexandria for relatively more affordable single-family homes in the Langley Pyramid. Realtors are also reporting growing employment centers in Tysons and Reston are bringing in new young families into our communities. We are also seeing demolitions and rebuilds at existing lots, similar to the experience in the older McLean neighborhoods. These demolitions are regularly occurring where one house is replaced with five or more houses that are attracting families with school-age children. These macro developments impact the Langley Pyramid and other suburbs in our county. These trends are also supported by research studies that when it comes to raising a family, families tend to move to single-family homes from urban neighborhoods.

If requested, the GFCA Special Committee on Schools would be happy to follow up with supporting documentation on these trends in the Langley HS community. Committee co-chairs Gordon Harris and Fadi Shadid may be reached at [schools@gfca.org](mailto:schools@gfca.org).