

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

February 12, 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Transportation Depots—Update

In January 2006, the Montgomery County Council adopted the Shady Grove Sector Plan (Sector Plan). The adoption of the Sector Plan signaled the future transformation of the existing County Service Park along Crabbs Branch Way from an industrial complex into a mixed-use community with a new residential focus at the Shady Grove Metro Station. In December 2007, the county executive placed in motion the County Smart Growth Initiative to relocate the County Service Park and move forward with the Sector Plan development around the Shady Grove Metro Station.

The Smart Growth Initiative currently will relocate the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Food Services Central Production Facility and Distribution Warehouse to a new location on Snouffer School Road in Gaithersburg, known as the Webb Tract. The Webb Tract also will house the MCPS Shady Grove Central Maintenance Depot. Other agency operations, such as the county's Equipment Maintenance and Operations Center and Liquor Warehouse, along with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Maintenance Facility, will be relocated to other sites in the county. The largest operation at the County Service Park, the MCPS Shady Grove North and South Transportation Depots, does not have a relocation site.

The MCPS Department of Transportation operates its school bus fleet from five primary depot locations around the county. During the last 30 years, the MCPS school bus fleet has more than doubled in size, from 600 buses to a fleet of 1,272 buses. The MCPS Department of Transportation has been working creatively to cope with severe overcrowding at its depots. Three of the depots are significantly overutilized—Bethesda (169 percent), Clarksburg (226 percent), and Shady Grove North and South (167 percent). The Randolph and West Farm depots are both at capacity and cannot accommodate any additional school buses.

In May 2012, Councilmember Valerie Ervin, chair of the County Council Education Committee, requested that Council staff convene an informal staff work group, including MCPS and Executive Branch staff, to review the relocation of the Shady Grove Transportation Depot, as well as the overutilization at the remaining depots in the county. The charge of the work group was to review best practices associated with school bus depot locations and school bus maintenance and to prepare materials on the pros and cons of a variety of potential options. This work group was formed and met numerous times from July 2012 through December 2012.

Mr. Todd M. Watkins, director, Department of Transportation and Mr. James Song, director, Department of Facilities Management, will be joined by members of the work group at the table today to present an update on transportation depots.

JPS:ak