EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The CIP presented in this EFMP reflects changes to the CIP as a result of an annual review of the demographic and facility needs of SMCPS. Based on a decline in enrollment growth that began occurring in 2015 and the systemic renovation needs of the many facilities constructed in the 1990's, the CIP continues to reflect a focus on maintaining existing infrastructure. The school system had previously been pursuing a new elementary school in the central portion of the county; however, current enrollment does not support the continuation of the project at this time. In addition, there have not been sufficient capacity needs to obtain planning approval for a secondary capacity project in recent years. The current enrollment projections do not indicate a change to warrant requesting any new capacity projects within the next six years. However, recent local activity seems to be indicating that additional residential projects are beginning to move forward. This development activity will be monitored closely and taken into consideration when determining future capacity needs. Other factors to be considered in the capacity discussion include enrollment in the virtual academy, home school programs, and the implementation of additional PreKindergarten (PreK) capacity as part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint). The school system recently completed a facility utilization study that provides a variety of options to address future capacity needs. The study will serve a resource in future capital project planning. The EFMP serves as the planning tool for all State CIP projects, which includes traditional State CIP funding, Healthy Schools funding, and BTLA funding.

A. Historical Perspective

During the 1990's, the school system embarked on an aggressive modernization program to bring the existing public school facilities up to modern educational standards while meeting the needs of our growing student population. Funding from the state Public School Construction Program (PSCP), during that time, was focused on addition/renovation projects and the school system was able to obtain significant state funding for the addition/modernization of seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and all three high schools. In addition, the school system replaced the former Hollywood Elementary School with a larger facility on a new site to accommodate growth in the northern portion of the Lexington Park Development District (LPDD). The school system maintained a program to address older facilities through systemic modernization including roofs and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, as well as the federally mandated American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) initiative.

As student populations grew, the focus of the school construction program shifted to providing capacity through new school construction. The George Washington Carver Elementary School was replaced with a new facility that was located outside of the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ). The new facility was built larger to meet the student population needs of the LPDD in combination with the addition/renovation of Lexington Park Elementary School, which had been previously completed in 2001. The ability to construct the required additional capacity to meet the needs of a growing community was analyzed at the remaining schools, which had not yet received an addition/renovation. Based on site constraints and location to the proposed student populations to be served, it was determined that a program would be developed around a new school construction plan.

Two new schools were constructed in growth areas to meet the growing elementary school population. Both sites were chosen for their ability to meet the needs of the school system into the future.

Opened	School Name	State Capacity	Location
2009-10	Evergreen E.S.	644	California, MD
2015-16	Captain Walter Francis Duke E.S.	644	Leonardtown, MD

The school system has acquired a site south of Great Mills that can be used as the third new elementary school, when needed. Given the continued slower enrollment growth at the elementary school level, the need for this project is beyond the current six-year CIP. Should enrollment patterns change, the timing of the project will be adjusted accordingly.

To date, the school system has completed the expansion and modernization of eight elementary schools, all four middle schools, all three high schools, one career and technology center, and has built four new elementary schools:

Elementary Schools Modernized (8 out of 18)
Benjamin Banneker (1999), Dynard (1990), Leonardtown (2006), Lettie Marshall Dent (1991), Lexington Park (1999), Green Holly (1999), Park Hall (1992), Piney Point (1995)

Middle Schools Modernized (4 out of 4)
Esperanza (1997), Margaret Brent (1998), Leonardtown (2011), Spring Ridge (2016)

High Schools Modernized (3 out of 3)
Chopticon (1997), Great Mills (1994), Leonardtown (1998)

Career and Technology Center Modernized
Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Technology Center (JAFCTC) (2001)

New School Construction
Hollywood Elementary School (1991), George Washington Carver Elementary School (2003), Evergreen Elementary School (2009), Captain Walter Francis Duke Elementary School (2015)

In 2007 the Chesapeake Public Charter School (CPCS) was opened. This facility serves Kindergarten through eighth grade. The school is currently undergoing an expansion into additional space. The capacity for the 2022-2023 school year will be 520, with plans to reach a capacity of 540 in the 2023-2024 school year.

The school system has met the needs of the existing infrastructure through state-funded limited renovations, roof replacements, HVAC renovations, science lab modifications, Technology in Maryland projects, PreK classroom additions, Kindergarten classroom additions, lighting projects, energy conservation projects, security projects, and gymnasium additions. In addition to the state-funded projects, the school system also meets the needs of the physical environments of our schools with locally funded projects, including: ADA, asbestos abatement, clean air, HVAC, roof replacement, parking, relocatable classrooms, well replacements, sewer plants, playgrounds, flooring, paving, and meeting changing educational program requirements. The average age of facilities in 2021 was 30 years.

B. Current Findings

Projected Student Growth

Based on current enrollment projections, the school system will receive 288 new elementary school students, lose 30 middle school students, and lose 7 high school students in the next six years. The CIP is fluid and adjusted as growth patterns change and student enrollment is impacted.

The county's population was 113,777 persons in the 2020 Census. This was an increase of 8,626 persons since the last Census, which is an 8.2% increase. This is less than the July 1, 2020 estimate of 113,953 but a higher percentage increase than the 7% seen statewide. The population is projected to reach 131,260 persons by the year 2030. The Southern Maryland region is projected to grow to 413,630 persons by 2030, with the 131,260 in St. Mary's County representing 32% of the regional population. However, based on 2020 Census data these projections may be revised. As of July 1, 2021 the county population was estimated to be 114,468.

This level pattern of growth is reflected in the current enrollment projections. Enrollments will remain stable throughout the projection period, with a net change in total enrollment of an additional 156 students at the end of the six year projection period. In the sixth year, which is the 2027-2028 school year, it is forecast that there will be 17,294 students enrolled in grades PreK-12. This breaks down to an additional 288 elementary school students (including PreK), a loss of thirty middle school students, and a loss of 7 high school students over the current enrollment. These projected enrollments do not support a new capacity project. With that said however, recent events have shown that projections and plans can change very quickly. Demographic data will be closely monitored as the recovery from COVID-19 continues, with the CIP remaining fluid and adjusted to meet growth and enrollment as necessary. As is always the case, any future capacity needs will also need to be balanced with available funding and timing of capital projects.

C. Proposed Plan

Based on the current projected enrollment needs, the proposed CIP reflects the deferral of any new capacity projects beyond the next six years. While there is a shortfall of capacity at several schools within the county, there is insufficient capacity needs to obtain funding approval from the state, which currently provides 58% of the eligible construction funding. The IAC requires that approximately 50% of the students required for the new school be enrolled at the time of approval and that the remaining students required to fill the building will be in place at occupancy. Our current demographics fall short of the required enrollments for approval based on the state rated capacities (SRC) of our existing facilities.

School Type	Proposed New SRC	Existing SRC	FY 2023 Projected Enrollment	FY 2027 Projected Enrollment	FY 2023 Difference	FY 2027 Difference
Elementary	644	8,791	7,810	7,912	981	879
Middle	500	4,147	4,015	3,957	132	190
High	508	5,085	5,444	5,366	(359)	(281)

Throughout the projection period, there is a surplus of capacity at the elementary school level and sufficient capacity at the middle school level. While there is a shortfall of approximately 300 seats at the high school level, this shortfall remains stable and does not grow

larger during the projection period. There are insufficient capacity needs to warrant a new elementary school (644 capacity), middle school (1,000 capacity), or high school (1,695 capacity) during the next ten years based on current enrollment projections. This includes the previously proposed 1,200 seat capacity combination secondary facility. The recently completed facilities needs study provides options for addressing the projected capacity shortfall at the high school level as well as possibilities for maximizing available capacities. The tools provided in the study will be consulted moving forward as demographic and enrollment trends develop. The short term plan for dealing with individual school capacity issues will continue to be the utilization of relocatable classrooms. Both state and local resources will be utilized to provide relocatable classrooms where needed, with a goal to keep the age of such facilities at 15 years or less.

The proposed FY 2024 through FY 2029 capital plan addresses a large number of systemic and infrastructure related projects that are coming due for life cycle replacement or were deferred the past as a result of the funding required to construct new schools. These projects include roof and HVAC systems, chiller and cooling tower replacements, plumbing and sewer systems, asphalt overlay and repairs, flooring replacement, and other needs such as athletic and auditorium system replacements. The school system utilized capital funds to renovate many of its existing facilities in the 1990's and early 2000's and now the systemic components of those projects have reached their life cycle replacements. These types of projects will be the focus of the capital plan for the next several years.

Moving forward there are several options for CIP funding at the state level. These include the traditional CIP, the BTLA funding, the Healthy School Facility Fund (HSFF) which has been expanded, the School Safety Grant Program (SSGP), and the Aging School Program (ASP). Future funding is also slated to include a Priority Fund which will be based on the results of the State Facilities Assessment (SFA). In addition, a new Revolving Loan Fund was established by legislation in 2022. However, with that said, the limiting factor will be the annual local resources available to provide the cost share match for state eligible projects. The IAC is working closely with Local Education Agencies (LEA)s to determine their needs and maximize the use of available state funding. At this time there is one particular systemic project of such magnitude that it will serve to redefine the planned project pipeline. This project is a limited renovation at Chopticon High School. The project has been expedited in order to utilize the available BTLA funding; however, doing so will require the revamping of the remaining planned capital program based on annual available funding. SMCPS is currently in the process of addressing the requirements of receiving BTL funding including the establishment of design standards and development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA). In addition to this, SMCPS is working to define the project scope and determine the resulting impacts to the future capital program. This is all coupled with the current volatile construction industry where availability and pricing are near to impossible to determine. In summary, at this time the FY 2024 CIP is defined, with future capital projects to be further refined and slated. SMCPS will continue to seek all funding options and work closely with the state and local government to maximize funding and provide for the capital needs of the school system.