

Why do we think Olney needs more school sites?

1. How Well Did the 1980 Olney Master Plan Forecast the Need for Schools?

From the 1980 Olney Master Plan, School Section – Conclusion (page 83):

“Preliminary analysis of statistics and trends suggests the possibility that no new schools may be needed in Olney over the next 20 years.

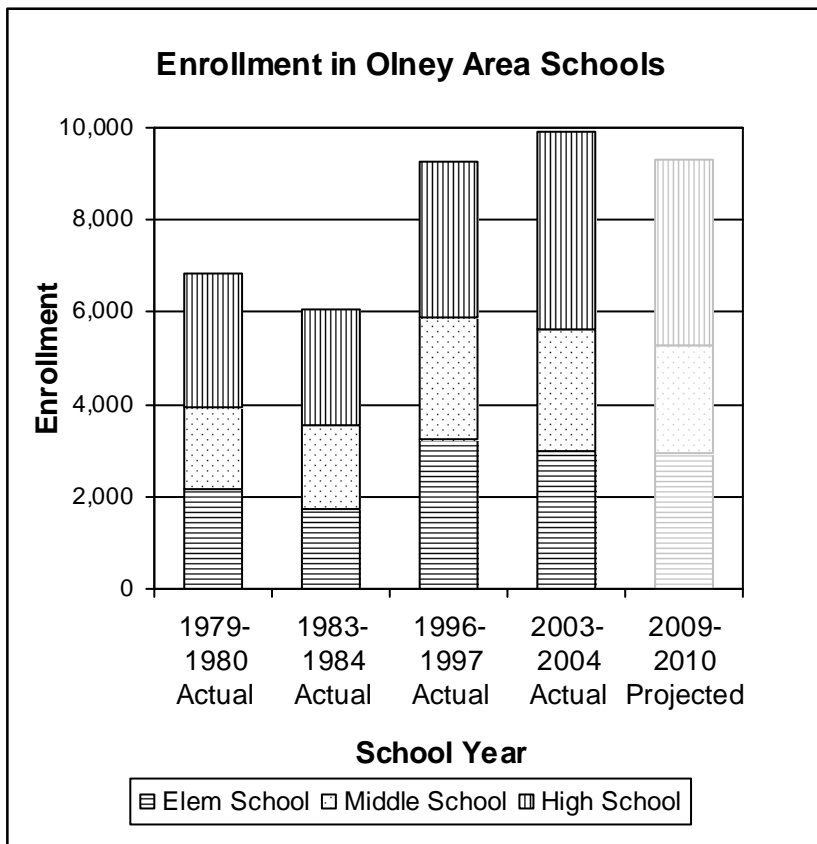
The number of school-aged children is expected to **increase only slightly** by 1996. ...”

In Fact:

Since the 1980 plan:

- ❑ two new schools have been built in Olney (Brooke Grove Elementary School and Rosa Parks Middle School)
- ❑ additions were built to Olney Elementary School and Sherwood High School
- ❑ another addition is planned for Sherwood High School
- ❑ the Magruder cluster added a new middle school and a new elementary school
- ❑ a new cluster was created when Blake High School was built, which serves a significant portion of Olney.

The Olney Schools included in the 1980 Master Plan analysis, plus the two additional schools built in Olney in the 1989 and 1992, showed an **increase in enrollment of 31%** by the 1995-1996 school year. This does not even take into account the effect of the new schools outside of the Olney planning area that serve Olney students. By 2003, the enrollment at the analyzed schools had increased by 45% over the 1978 levels.



About this chart:

Eleven schools were analyzed in the 1980 Olney Master Plan:

- Elementary: Belmont, Cashell, Greenwood, Olney, Sherwood, Laytonsville, Flower Valley
- Middle/Junior High: Farquhar, Redland
- High: Sherwood, Magruder

For our analysis, we excluded Laytonsville Elementary and Flower Valley Elementary because only a small portion of their population comes from the Olney Area. We included two additional schools,

- Brooke Grove Elementary, built in 1989
- Rosa Parks Middle, built in 1992 which were built to serve the Olney planning area.

Complete data is at the end of this report.

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2. How Does What Happened in 1978-1995 Affect Our View of the Draft Master Plan?

The 1980 Master Plan forecasts of housing units and population for 1995 were pretty close to what actually happened (between the intermediate and high estimates given in the plan)

Increase in housing units, 1978 – 1995:	4,200 units
Increase in population, 1978 – 1995:	10,100 people

Yet the plan forecast the number of school age children to “increase only slightly”, when in fact the number of students increased by 31% in that same period!

The current draft of the Olney Master Plan forecasts an increase of 2,500 housing units and 7,000 to 9,000 people. **Yet the plan once again says “the proposed growth [in school enrollment] is relatively small.”**

The 2005 CIP actually projects a 6% decline in school enrollment in the analyzed schools by 2009!

Also of great concern is the growth in neighboring clusters that share the same schools: Upper Rock Creek, Sandy Spring/Ashton, and Shady Grove, yielding thousands of housing units and potentially tens of thousands of people.

The plan identifies only one site within the Olney Master Plan area (Oaks Middle School on Cashell Road) and references a site in the Upper Rock Creek Plan (Sherwood #6 on Wickham Road). (The site on Emory Lane is in the ICC right-of-way.) The Sandy Spring / Ashton Plan does not even mention schools, and the Shady Grove plan admits that its students will need to be accommodated in adjacent clusters.

The Bottom Line:

- ❑ **Olney is going to grow.** The draft Olney Master Plan could result in a 25% increase in population in Olney. A recent report by the Urban Land Institute forecasts higher county population growth than is currently projected. The Strategic Economic Development Plan recommends a 2% rate of growth for Montgomery County. This is twice the rate of growth that planning staff believes the County’s infrastructure can sustain.
- ❑ **Adjacent areas are going to grow.** Changes to the Upper Rock Creek, Sandy Spring/Ashton, and Shady Grove master plans will have a significant impact on Olney area schools.
- ❑ **Most of our schools are at or near capacity now.** See chart below.
- ❑ **Historical projections of future enrollment were grossly underestimated.** Our analysis here shows how poorly the 1980 plan forecast growth. Recent analysis done on a county-wide level has shown a consistent pattern of underestimating growth.
- ❑ **Olney may well need an additional school site.** The former Olney High School site on Bowie Mill Road, which was declared surplus in 1996, should be reclaimed by the school board and held in reserve to accommodate future growth in Olney and the surrounding clusters.

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Olney Area Schools Enrollment and Capacity in Selected Years

School		from 1980 Olney MP		1983-84	1996-1997	2003-2004	2009-2010
		Sept '79	Projected Sept '83	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected
Belmont ES 1974	Capacity	500	500	555	483	489	442
	Enrollment	366	265	277	469	424	391
Brooke Grove ES 1989	Capacity				647	601	569
	Enrollment				789	511	495
Cashell ES 1969	Capacity	520	520	530	463	381	340
	Enrollment	426	376	395	454	349	332
Greenwood ES 1970	Capacity	650	650	620	548	664	614
	Enrollment	570	458	416	440	616	606
Olney ES 1954, 1990	Capacity	485	485	480	665	678	628
	Enrollment	385	504	331	598	615	615
Sherwood ES 1977	Capacity	510	510	556	475	450	403
	Enrollment	413	286	304	506	488	489
Total Elementary	Capacity	2,665	2,665	2,741	3,281	3,263	2,996
	Enrollment	2,160	1,889	1,723	3,256	3,003	2,928
Farquhar MS 1978	Capacity	925	925	1,025	899	896	896
	Enrollment	929	910	924	827	724	650
Rosa Parks MS 1992	Capacity				940	950	950
	Enrollment				1,008	952	900
Redland MS 1971	Capacity	905	905	854	778	792	792
	Enrollment	837	771	899	800	945	782
Total Middle School	Capacity	1,830	1,830	1,879	2,617	2,638	2,638
	Enrollment	1,766	1,681	1,823	2,635	2,621	2,332
Sherwood HS 1950, 1991	Capacity	1,440	1,440	1,415	1,718	1,712	1,982
	Enrollment	1,434	1,399	1,302	1,804	2,088	2,000
Magruder HS 1970	Capacity	1,590	1,590	1,520	1,588	2,030	2,030
	Enrollment	1,500	1,127	1,213	1,555	2,205	2,050
Total High School	Capacity	3,030	3,030	2,935	3,306	3,742	4,012
	Enrollment	2,934	2,526	2,515	3,359	4,293	4,050
TOTAL	Capacity	7,525	7,525	7,555	9,204	9,643	9,646
	Enrollment	6,860	6,096	6,061	9,250	9,917	9,310

Sources:

1980 Olney Master Plan

MCPS Statistical Profiles, 1983-84

MCPS Schools-at-a-Glance, 1996-1997

FY2005 Superintendent's Recommended Capital Budget and FY 2005 to FY 2010 Capital Improvements Program