

BOARD OF EDUCATION
The School District of South Orange and Maplewood
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TO: Members, Board of Education
Brian Osborne, Superintendent

FROM: Cheryl Schneider, Board Secretary

SUBJECT: Update on District Capital Improvement Plan

The Board developed a guiding change document to guide administration and establish parameters for the development of capital improvement proposals for presentation to the Board. The guide focused on capital plans for Columbia High School, specifically designed to consider a replacement for the CHS swimming pool which is in need of repair:

- Capital improvements that will ensure that all District facilities meet the educational and enrollment demands of the 21st century
- Capital improvements at CHS that supports advances in STEM education
- Educational and performance space at CHS that supports the tradition of excellence in the fine and performing arts
- An aquatic facility that serves CHS and the community
- A capital improvement plan that is prioritized and phased to gain funding approval by the Board of School Estimate

Multiple unacceptable means were indicated including the emphasis that the high school renewal plan shall not be implemented without:

- Community engagement addressing:
 - Renewal of CHS for the 21st century
 - Importance of the pool for CHS
 - Importance of a community-centered aquatic center
 - Tax implications of renewal plans
- Securing partnerships in the construction, maintenance, and/or operation of the facility
- Securing sponsorships and/or naming rights for a minimum of 10% of the construction costs

In April 2011, the Board of Education hired EI Architecture and Engineering firm to analyze all of the District facilities and recommend improvements that would enable SOMSD to meet the educational demands of the 21st century. A preliminary report was made in April 2012 and

District administration worked with EI to prioritize capital improvement projects and the recommended phasing of these projects. At the same time, a high school renewal plan was developed, with multiple implementation options, as called for in the guiding change document. The plans developed took into consideration the components defined by the document and involved the CHS staff community in informing the design. Plans were presented at public board meetings including preliminary tax implications associated with the plan. A community forum was planned specifically to receive feedback on the importance of the pool for CHS and the importance of a community-centered aquatic center.

Initial discussions with potential partners, as well as feedback from the community and Board of School Estimate members and ultimately by Board of Education members, pointed towards the South Mountain YMCA as a natural partner in developing a community-centered aquatic center. YMCA administration was involved in the plan development and was enthusiastic about the potential proposals. The YMCA helped solicit potential partnership frameworks from national YMCA's that had partnered with schools on similar ventures.

While questions regarding the viability of the partnership, community support for the pool, and concerns over the long term tax impact of the plans became more evident, the administration suggested taking more time to explore additional options given the increasing uncertainty among board members. The community forum was postponed and plans to meet with the Board of School Estimate for bond sale consideration were cancelled.

Maintenance needs for the existing pool, while expensive, are scheduled to take place this summer, as the repairs will be necessary regardless of the future use of the pool. Engineers have estimated that we could use the existing pool for another two years, giving us time to give further consideration to various options.

The Board agreed to delay decision on the plans and to include any potential capital improvements in the standard three year bonding cycle that the district had been following in the past. Administration has been working with EI to incorporate the CHS renewal plans into the long range capital plan that was being developed. Options are now being developed with and without a swimming pool. While the Guiding Change Document emphasizes the CHS renewal, the original context of the document calling for the "renewal of District facilities to meet the educational and enrollment demands of the 21st century" and "providing educational, performance and athletic facilities that will benefit the larger South Orange-Maplewood community" suggests that the results of the district-wide facility assessment should not be overlooked.

In order to prepare for bond sales in January 2014, a tentative schedule for developing the capital plan, incorporating the CHS renewal, would be:

- May – June: Administration continues to develop the long range capital plan
- June: Public forum to present initial plans and receive community feedback
- July – August: Further develop plan and project schedule based on community feedback
- Sept-Oct: Engage architects for DOE submittals
- October: Public forum to present plans with Board of School Estimate participation
- November: Board discussion of proposed plans for January bonding
- December: Board consideration of bonding request to go to Board of School Estimate
- January: Board of School Estimate meeting to consider authorization of bond sales
- Jan-Feb: Bid for summer construction projects
- March: Sell bonds, award contracts for summer projects (March/April)
- June: Begin work on projects scheduled for Summer 2014

While the overall schedule is being developed, a sample of potential projects to be included in the 2014 bonding include (costs are rough estimates for discussion purposes):

• Columbia High School Science Lab/Classroom Conversion	\$ 2,500,000
• Maplewood Middle Science Lab Renovation	\$ 500,000
• Multiple roofing projects, district-wide	\$ 1,500,000
• Mechanical upgrades, boiler conversion, sites tbd	\$ 2,500,000
• Columbia High School – repurpose pool area	\$ 1,200,000
• Maplewood Middle School cafeteria expansion	\$ 200,000
• Window replacement, multiple locations	<u>\$ 2,600,000</u>
	\$11,000,000

An addition to Columbia High School, with or without a swimming pool, would likely be recommended to be bonded above the \$11,000,000 rather than replacing projects. A full analysis of the anticipated debt service and tax impact will be presented with the plans once they are more thoroughly developed.