



Whittier Middle School Building Addition Update

Progress Report - Where We Are Now

The Middle School Building Committee continues to meet monthly with the architects from the Portland Design Team (PDT). Final concept plans have been drafted, and detailing work is in progress. At this point we know how much new square footage is needed in an addition, the concept of a secure, central entrance has been redesigned, engineering experts are investigating the required modifications necessary to tie utilities with the existing structure and geotechnical testing is being conducted to see what is needed for the land to accept a new foundation for the structure. The basic building design and layout will not change from this point, and the internal layout can be seen at the end of this article.

The Project

At this point, you have only heard that we are proposing to build an addition and why it is needed.

The new construction will contain nine new classrooms. These classrooms will replace the six existing classrooms presently housed in the three modular buildings and three that will be displaced to make room for a shift in spaces. There will be an additional science lab and flex-classroom to offer expanded STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs, renovation to enlarge spaces for Special Education, and the addition of supporting spaces such as restrooms, janitorial and IT closets, machine room and storage spaces.

The renovations in the middle school will be the redesign of the administrative offices and the construction of new bathrooms to be more centrally located to the new central building entrance. In the high school, there will be some modifications in spaces to make room for the shared vestibule and relocating those support offices that will be moved.

The shared entrance and foyer has become necessary as threats to school security have

become more prevalent in today's society. Our buildings are secure, but there are gaps in our lines-of-sight that need to be closed to better protect the occupants of our school. The shared central entrance will funnel all visitors to a location where they are met face-to-face with an office staff versus a video.

Timeline

This project proposal will go to referendum in June 2017. With a passing vote, the plans would then spend the next six months with the architects for the creation of project documents and to obtain approvals/permitting. Construction bidding will begin in January of 2018 and then it would be 12 to 18 months for construction with the goal to have the doors open in August 2019. The project development will be done in phases to minimize any inconveniences to regular school instruction and interior renovations to the existing building could take place during the summer months.

Estimated Price Tag

Work continues on the overall budget for the project, and it is important to note that the financial estimates at this point are still drafts. There are still loose ends surrounding site and utility work. The architects are confident that they will, by the end of January, have a hard number to send to a referendum. In the meantime, here is what the proximate budget looks like.

Site Work	\$891,200
Middle School Renovations	\$501,600
Middle School Addition	\$3,765,200
High School Renovations	\$592,800
Shared Central Entry/Walkway	\$420,000
Slab for Future Second Floor	\$130,300
Administrative Costs	\$1,138,143
Fees and Services	\$841,976
Total Estimate	\$8,281,219

The Site Work is all the preparation to the

ground to receive the new foundation, underground utilities and the exterior finish work like sidewalks and paving.

The Middle School Renovations will be the alterations required to open up the existing building to receive the new addition and well as some interior renovations to the offices inside the current middle school.

The Middle School addition is all the new square footage to be constructed for the expansion.

With the new central entryway proposed, interior renovations to the High School are required to shift offices and rooms to be shared by both schools to centralized locations.

As recommended by the public in attendance at our first public meeting, a Slab for a Future Second Floor will be poured on the new addition, and this cost included the supporting substructure for the slab.

Administrative Costs comprise of mobile equipment and classroom furniture for the newly created spaces, legal, advertising and processing fees, and a standard ten percent contingency of \$627,292. The additional Fees and Services include the charges for the architectural and engineering services, permitting, surveying, construction testing, project coordination and administration as well as the compensation for the Clerk of the Works.

Project Funding

Until this year, the State of Maine has not funded new school construction projects for many years. They have recently opened up that

program, and school districts can once again apply for funding. Unfortunately, the process is lengthy, and school construction projects that have been previously approved for funding have had to wait fifteen to twenty years before any money becomes available. During that waiting period, there is still potential to have a new proposal with increased urgency bump other proposals further down the priority list.

Twenty years is too long to wait for our project, and it will have to be completely funded locally.

We are proposing a 20-year bond. With today's interest rates at roughly 2.5%, an annual payment would range from \$620,000 and decrease from year to year to a final amount of \$420,000. At the time the first bond payment comes due in November of 2021, \$159,138 of previously committed bond payments will have retired easing some of the financial burned.

Public Participation

In February, there will be a public meeting to introduce the plans to those interested and for the building committee to hear feedback on the project. The time and date have yet to be determined. All of the committee's meeting notes can be found on the RSU website, and we have created an email address that you can send any questions, comments or concerns. We do want to hear from you. Send messages to msproject@rsu16.org

-John Hawley, RSU 16 Operations Director

