



Pocantico Hills  
Central School District

# CAPITAL PROJECT PLANNING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

OCTOBER 1, 2018



# Why is the District considering a capital project?

All school buildings in New York State must be assessed every five years by way of the completion of a Building Condition Survey (BCS). This assessment must be completed by a licensed architect. Our BCS was completed on August 28, 2015 by H2M Architects and Engineers.

Our building was found to be in good condition, but the BCS identified various areas within our building and campus that are in need of some improvement. These areas in need of improvement were recorded in a document that becomes the District's Five Year Plan. This Plan was initially shared with the Board in the fall of 2015.



# What is the purpose of the Five Year Plan?

The Five Year Plan (FYP) serves as a basis for both building maintenance and capital project planning over the next five years. Based on the items identified in the FYP, in July of 2016 the District's Facilities Committee requested that the new administration develop a conceptual capital project plan that would not only address the items in the FYP, but would also maximize the physical resources of the District.

The new administration met with the architects, walked the building and grounds, spoke with various stakeholders throughout the District, and made suggestions to the architects of various conceptual items that could be included in an overall plan. The architects then turned those ideas into the first conceptual drawing of what that plan would look like.



# What were the next steps in the process?

The initial conceptual plan was shared with the Facilities Committee in the spring of 2016. In the fall of 2017, the District established a Facilities Advisory Committee and released a survey to district residents to help identify stakeholder priorities. We have continued collaborating with our various partners, including architects, engineers and our construction manager, to fine tune the work to become the plan as it exists today.



# What is currently included in the Capital Project Plan?

The Plan currently consists of the following:

- Demolition and reconstruction of the two eastern-most pairs of tennis courts
- Expansion of the parking area at Gate 3 into the space where the pair of tennis courts closest to the road currently exist
- Renovation of the area near the library entrance that includes handicapped parking and a handicapped accessible ramp
- Relocation of the gasoline and diesel fuel tanks to Gate 1 parking area
- Repaving of the driveway at Gate 2, including replacement of the sidewalk and curbs
- Addition of handicapped parking in the loop at Gate 1 near the pond
- Completion of various items identified in the BCS
- Upgrade of the athletic fields to improve surface and include better drainage (separate voting item)
- Installation of air conditioning in the gym (separate voting item)



# Why are tennis courts included in the plan?

It is our understanding that the tennis courts have provided an essential recreational component to residents of the district in the past. This was reinforced when the Facilities Survey completed by residents in the fall of 2017 showed the rehabilitation of the tennis courts receiving the highest number of priority votes.

The tennis courts would also become part of our physical education and summer day camp programming.



Why do we need to demolish and reconstruct the tennis courts, instead of just resurfacing them?

Based on what the engineers from our architectural firm have observed on the surface of the courts, the way in which they have settled implies there are subsurface issues. Additional testing will be required to confirm this.

Our Facilities Advisory Committee also requested that we obtain independent opinions from companies that could assess the condition of our tennis courts. We received opinions from three separate companies and all three of them said that if we just resurface the courts we would not achieve lasting results and the courts would soon be unusable again. Opinions varied, and indicated this could take anywhere from one season to two years. Demolishing and reconstructing the tennis courts would provide for a longer life and a better quality playing surface.



Can we just  
demolish the  
tennis courts  
and turn them  
back to green  
space?

Yes. If the courts were returned back to green space, the cost would be about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the cost of demolition and reconstruction.



# Why aren't we planning to replace all three pairs of tennis courts?

During our conversations with stakeholders from both facilities committees, it was determined that two pairs of tennis courts should be sufficient for our needs. This allows us to utilize the space from the third pair of tennis courts to alleviate our parking challenges (see next item).



# Why is expanded parking at Gate 3 included in the plan?

We currently have a total of 135 parking spaces available for daily parking, but we have 139 positions (112 Pocantico positions, 25 BOCES positions, and 2 contracted positions) that potentially need a parking space on a daily basis. We also have a variety of people who visit the school, for whom there is not sufficient parking:

- Special education related service providers
- Professional development providers
- Member of Committees on Special Education (6-12 people can be at these meetings)
- Consultants and contractors
- Supplemental substitute teachers
- Student teachers and student interns
- Auditors



If we have more positions than we have parking spaces, why do I see empty parking spaces in the Gate 1 lot during the day?

We have 6 part time bus drivers and 12 part time monitors who work varied hours throughout the day. They typically arrive early in the morning to handle our A.M. bus runs, leave the premises in the middle of the day, and then return at the end of the day to complete the P.M. bus runs. In addition, some of the BOCES staff are itinerant workers; they spend only a portion of the day in our building, depending on the needs of the students they serve.

A small number of our staff currently hold multiple positions (a food service worker may also be a bus monitor) and a couple of our staff members choose to car pool on most days, but that may not always be the case and spaces need to be available for all positions.



# How would additional parking help visitors of the school?

With the expansion of parking at Gate 3, we would be able to reserve additional spaces for visitors in that parking area closest to the main entrance of the school. Since we require visitors to enter through this entrance to check in with our security guard, parking should be available at this gate.



Would it be possible to only reserve visitor parking spaces and leave staff spaces unassigned?

This may work with the expansion of parking, but as noted above, we currently do not have a sufficient number of spaces for our existing staff, let alone visitors.

In an effort to improve parking for visitors, we have started the practice of opening Gate 2 for parent parking when we hold events that will draw a large number of people. Also, this year we will start assigning our part time bus drivers and monitors to Gate 3 so their spaces are available for visitors there in the middle of the day, rather than at Gate 1. This will help with some of our challenges, but not all.



What if we don't expand parking, and instead demolish and reconstruct all three pairs of tennis courts?

This option would cost about half of the cost of the parking expansion. However, we would still have the challenge of an insufficient number of parking spaces.



Are there any other options we could consider to alleviate the parking challenges?

Yes, we could consider eliminating the BOCES program that is currently housed on our fourth floor. This would free up 24 parking spaces. However, it would also result in the loss of approximately \$135,000 in revenue each year.



# Why is the renovation of the area near the library entrance included in the plan?

The existing ramp that leads to the library entrance does not have the correct slope to qualify as an ADA-compliant entrance. It is currently used mainly for deliveries, and in its existing form it creates some challenges with deliveries as well.



Is this required to be a handicapped entrance for compliance purposes?

The District is required to provide handicapped accessible entry to the building. If we create handicapped parking at the Gate 1 bus circle (discussed below) we would not have to create it at the library entrance for purposes of visitors entering the school. It would, however, be helpful to visitors entering the building at the main entrance and to staff that require handicapped parking. The number of spaces that would be available at the Gate 1 bus circle would not be sufficient to cover all handicapped parking needs.



# Why is relocating the gasoline and diesel fuel tanks to Gate 1 parking area included in the plan?

The current location of the fuel tanks presents us with some challenges. While they are technically in compliance with regulations regarding their proximity to the building, they are closer than we would like them to be for safety purposes. Also, by having the tanks at Gate 3, there is a lot more traffic and congestion at Gate 3 than is desirable. This traffic and congestion causes hazards, especially when combined with the narrow entrance to the Gate 3 parking lot. There have been close calls where traffic accidents have been narrowly avoided, both within the Gate 3 parking area and at the Gate 3 entrance. Our consultants agree that the existing location of the tanks does not provide proper access for our buses.

By moving the fuel tanks to the upper area of the Gate 1 parking lot, we eliminate the need for any buses to use Gate 3. All of our buses would be parked in one area, in close proximity to their fueling station. This would improve our safety and efficiency.



Does moving  
the fuel tanks  
to Gate 1  
impact parking  
there?

Yes, we would lose 13 parking spaces, but these spaces would be made up with the expansion of parking at Gate 3.

If we move the fuel tanks to Gate 1 without expanding parking at Gate 3, our parking shortage will be even worse.



Does it make sense to move all bus parking to Gate 1 without moving the fuel tanks?

Moving bus parking to Gate 1 without moving the tanks does not eliminate the need for buses to utilize Gate 3. We would still be subject to congestion and traffic hazards, as well as visibility issues when buses make the left turn out of Gate 3.



How does moving the fuel tanks relate to the handicapped accessible parking at the library entrance?

Moving the fuel tanks to the parking area at Gate 1 eliminates many hazards at Gate 3, including a safer area for handicapped parking at the library entrance.



# Why is repaving at Gate 2 included in the plan?

The driveway in Gate 2 is in need of repaving due to a large number of potholes and general deterioration of the blacktop. In addition, the sidewalks and curbs are in need of replacement.



Why is  
handicapped  
parking at the  
Gate 1 bus  
circle included  
in the plan?

This item is included in order to provide handicapped accessible parking to both the school building and the pool area. The second floor of the school could then be accessed via the elevator between floors 1 and 2.



# Why are various items from the BCS included in the plan?

As noted earlier, the architects identified areas in need of improvement when they conducted the BCS. Those areas are as follows:

- The large exterior retaining wall at Gate 2 needs to be repointed to avoid further deterioration.
- The two chimneys on the original building need to be repointed to avoid further deterioration.
- The exterior stairs leading to the library and the auditorium, and the stairs from the upper lot at Gate 3 to the Middle School need repair.
- There are 28 interior doors that are in need of replacement due to their poor condition and/or in need of handicapped accessible door hardware.
- We need new handrails throughout the building for handicapped accessibility.
- We are in need of additional emergency lighting in areas of the building.



## Why are upgrades to the athletic fields included in the plan?

Our existing athletic fields have tripping hazards caused by dips and unevenness in the surface. Resodding the fields would address this issue. Adding appropriate drainage would allow the fields to remain in better shape for a longer period of time by eliminating the pooling of water that we see in certain areas of the fields. Keeping the fields in good shape is particularly important for us, as our fields get a lot of use; in addition to normal use during the school day and for our modified sports program, our fields are used for soccer on the weekends and camp in the summer.



Does the plan  
include turf  
fields?

No, turf fields are not being considered.



How long  
would the  
fields need to  
be closed to  
complete the  
upgrades?

The upgrades to the fields would require their closure for approximately one year.



# Why is air conditioning in the gym included in the plan?

Due to its positioning and the skylights located in the ceiling, our gymnasium gets particularly hot during the course of the day when outside temperatures are high. This is problematic for our students during the warmer months of the school year, and also for our campers during the summer. Adding air conditioning to this space will allow our physical education teacher and our camp director to schedule more activities in the gym, without temperature concerns. The space will also be more desirable for use by our resident groups after school.

Air conditioning of the gym received the second highest number of priority votes in our Facilities Survey.

