



**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

**TOWN OF ARLINGTON
OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

High School project budget set at \$291M

Schematic Design to be sent to Mass. School Building Authority for approval

February 6, 2019

As the Arlington High School Building Project nears the end of the Schematic Design phase, the AHS Building Committee voted yesterday to submit an approximate project budget of \$291M to the Mass. School Building Authority (MSBA). This represents a \$17M decrease from the original project estimate of \$308M. A new high school is necessary to accommodate increasing enrollment and address a deteriorating building that no longer meets educational needs. By partnering with the MSBA, the town is eligible to receive state funding for the project.

AHS Building Committee Chair Jeff Thielman remarked "I am excited about the design concept we have chosen as the future school for our young people. This design is cost-effective, sustainable and student-centered and new buildings will be available for use as early as 2022. This has been a collaborative process and we are grateful for the community's engagement so far."

In July 2018, at the end of the Feasibility Phase, the preliminary estimate for the project was \$308M. Additional design work, site analysis, and decisions to move several Town offices currently housed in the high school (IT, Facilities, Comptroller) to other town buildings, took place during the subsequent Schematic Design phase. A refined estimate of \$299M was presented to the Building Committee on January 29.

After three meetings focused on the budget, as well as input from the school administration, School Committee, and community, the Building Committee further reduced the scope of the project. This resulted in the 5.5% decrease from the original estimate. The proposed budget of \$291M will be submitted as part of the Schematic Design to the MSBA later this month.

In 2013, the New England Assoc. of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) placed the high school on warning for accreditation citing inadequate classrooms, science labs, and technology infrastructure, which affect the overall learning environment for the students. In 2015, the district was accepted into the MSBA grant program to help fund a future school. For the past two years, the AHS Building Committee has worked with Owner's Project Manager Skanska USA, HMFH Architects, school administrators, and the community to determine the educational needs of the school and the design that best meets those needs. Earlier this year, the Building Committee selected a 415,000 square foot all-new construction design concept with a design enrollment of 1,755 students in grades 9-12.

The Building Committee considered numerous factors when deciding which design concept to use for the future high school, including cost, educational fit, layout, sustainability, construction timeline, renovation of original buildings, disruption to students and community feedback.

The MSBA Board of Directors is expected to review and vote on Arlington's Schematic Design in mid-April. Assuming MSBA's acceptance of the Schematic Design, Arlington will have 120 days to secure local funding for the project through a debt exclusion - a temporary increase in taxes to pay for the 30-year debt to pay for a new school. A town-wide debt exclusion vote is planned for June 11.

Assuming the June town-wide debt exclusion vote is successful, along with Town Meeting approval, the project will move into the Design Development phase this summer. Construction could begin as early as July 2020 with the first building open to students in 2022 and potential completion of construction in 2024.

For more information on the AHS Building Project, visit www.ahsbuilding.org.