

SASD Long-Range Facilities Planning:

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated May 26, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Why is the District engaged in long-range facilities planning?

A:

- Capital Maintenance Needs
 - The District works hard to maintain its facilities. However, most of a school

district's year-to-year funding is spent on instruction and student services, leaving limited resources for capital maintenance projects like roof replacements or heating and cooling system repairs.

SASD conducted a comprehensive district-wide facilities study to help identify its long-range capital maintenance needs. Those needs were further refined and prioritized in 2022.

In total, the District faces over \$37.4 million in capital maintenance needs over the next 10 years.

- Educational Environments

- Teaching and learning has changed dramatically over the last several decades. In today's classrooms, learning is more active and collaborative with the student at the center. More and more, students work in small and large groups, solving problems and discussing issues.

In the facilities study, Stoughton schools were found to lack flexibility, natural daylight, proper interior and exterior site circulation, and collaboration spaces. One example showcasing these identified needs is the high school library and cafeteria. Although these spaces are at the heart of the building, they are enclosed and private. Opening up areas like these allows for students and small groups to gather at all times of the day.

By creating flexible, adaptable and varied learning environments, Stoughton schools can foster a student-focused approach to education and cultivate an environment where every student feels like they belong in our schools.

- Operational Efficiencies

- If the district address capital maintenance needs, improves educational environments, and implements sustainable elements: the district's potential operational savings may be used for other high-priority needs including: programming, staffing, curriculum, etc.

Dedicated physical education and cafeteria spaces at the elementary level would allow schedule flexibility, expand curriculum opportunities, promote equity across physical education programming, as well as provide space for large-group instruction, student performances, and community use.

Q: Isn't enrollment declining?

A: Yes, enrollment has been declining for about 20 years, and it is anticipated to continue to decline over the next few years. However, there are planned residential housing developments in the city of Stoughton. Additionally, according to Applied Population Laboratory's 2021 [report](#), these developments are projected to stabilize elementary enrollment by the mid-2020s.

Even if enrollment does continue to decline, our facilities are important community assets and deserve to be well-maintained and modernized to support teaching, learning, and belonging.

Q: What is a facilities referendum? What's an operational referendum?

A: There are two types of referenda school districts use to obtain additional funding: operational and capital.

A capital (facilities) referendum allows a district to issue debt (take out a loan) to pay for major facility projects. Much like a home mortgage, a capital referendum is typically financed over an extended period, often 20 years.

For background, Stoughton area voters supported a capital (facilities) referendum in 2010 for districtwide renovations. The 2010 referendum took advantage of interest free federal stimulus funds and was coupled with a restructuring of existing debt so it didn't increase our levy or have an impact to taxpayers.

An operating referendum is used to support daily operations and help maintain current programs and services. For many communities, an operating referendum offers a solution to manage funding gaps while keeping 100% of referendum tax dollars in the district and aligned with community expectations for their local schools.

For background, Stoughton area voters supported a 2014 operational referendum to balance the budget while making enrollment-driven staffing reductions.

Q: What are modern learning and collaboration spaces?

A: Twenty-first-century learning environments strive to focus on student-centered, hands-on, and project-based education. Historically, classrooms focused on the teacher-centric classroom (i.e. a lecture setting with students in rows and the teacher up front). While this is still important to the core of education, providing flexibility within the classroom and beyond allows teaching and learning to be dynamic. This encourages students to inquire, ask questions, and work together, rather than passively learn. Ways in which modern learning can be incorporated into instructional spaces are through the use of technology, flexible furniture, accessible collaboration space, small group instruction rooms, etc.

Q: How does our district receive funding?

A: School funding is complex and based on many factors. In the simplest terms:

The state sets the amount of state aid it will provide to schools and sets the revenue limit.

When it is known how much state aid will be provided (and, therefore, how much the state determines local property taxpayers can pay), districts set their budget levy. This levy amount is sent to all municipalities within the district for distribution to property taxpayers.

Q: How will our district use ESSER funds? What about the \$2M budget deficit?

A: At present, the district is planning for a \$2 million deficit for 2022-23 in our operational budget. Additionally, it was determined by the state that schools would receive essentially no increases in funding for the 2022-23 school year due to the significant amount of funds being provided for COVID relief by the federal government.

Therefore, the state indicated school districts should use one-time federal COVID relief funds (ESSER) to balance budgets. ESSER is part of our two-year plan to balance budgets in the next two years.

Q: When will there be an opportunity for parents and community members to give feedback?

A: Definitely. Gathering and using community feedback is one of our [Guiding Principles](#) in this process.

In February and March of 2022, we hosted a series of eight Staff and Community Workshops. Now, in early May, the community has the opportunity to weigh in using a community-wide survey.

Additionally, we encourage you to submit your questions or comments via this [Google form](#) as well as sign up for our Facilities email list.

Q: I find it hard to comment on buildings I don't work in. How can I get more information?

We have been asked this question by some staff members as well as by some parents in our community workshops. We are working on creating ways to “see” into buildings, whether that is walking tours, videos, or photo slideshows to provide you with needed visuals.

DISTRICT FACILITIES

Q: Can I view a list of district-owned facilities?

District-Owned Building	Original Construction	Renovations or Additions
Stoughton High School	1965 (57 years old)	Additions in 1973, 1985, 1997 and 2003 Renovations in 2010
River Bluff Middle School	1997	None
Sandhill Elementary School	1997	None
Fox Prairie Elementary School	1990	Addition in 1992

Kegonsa Elementary School	1962 (60 years old)	Addition in 1982 and 1996
Administration Building	1979/1984	Renovated 1997
Community Building (Community Gym)	1941 (81 years old)	Renovated 1979
Bus Garage	1962	Additions in 2002, 2008
Maintenance Shop	1972	1997
Yahara (formerly Yahara Elementary School)	1953 (69 years old)	Additions in 1960, 1973, 1996
1892 Building	1892	

Q: For context, what does facilities referenda look like in neighboring communities?

SASD: SASD held a facilities referendum in 1996, 2002 and 2010.

Other Districts: There are 18 school districts with significant portions of their geography in Dane County. Since 2010, 16 of these 18 pursued at least one facilities referendum. Stoughton and Marshall are the two that have not. Since 2010, these 16 districts attempted 37 facilities referenda. 31 of 37 were successful.

KEY TERMS

Q: Help! I'm lost in the acronyms and technical terms.

A: Here's a glossary:





Category	Term	Definition
General Referendum	Findorff and Eppstein Uhen & Architects (EUA)	EUA - architectural firm Findorff - construction management company
	Referendum Plural: referenda	A referendum is a public question placed on a ballot by a local unit. Past referenda have included capital (facilities) referenda and operating referenda.
	capital (facilities) referendum	Allows a district to issue debt (take out a loan) to pay for major facility projects. Much like a home mortgage, a capital

Category	Term	Definition
		referendum is typically financed over an extended period, often 20 years.
	operating referendum	Used to support daily operations and help maintain current programs and services. For many communities, an operating referendum offers a solution to manage funding gaps while keeping 100% of referendum tax dollars in the district and aligned with community expectations for their local schools.
	Facilities study	A facilities study is an independent, objective analysis of building and site conditions and an evaluation of the capabilities of the facilities to meet educational and community goals. The facilities study is often a critical first step in the planning process, helping the district better understand areas of need and deficiency. The document may be used to inform plans for ongoing maintenance, and as a foundation for future master planning or building projects.
Capital Maintenance	Capital maintenance	Projects to maintain our facilities' capital (buildings) through upgrades and replacements of systems, such as structure, mechanical, plumbing and electrical system.
	MEP - Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Systems	Includes systems such as fire alarm, fire protection, piping, plumbing, lighting, and HVAC systems.
	HVAC	Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
Building Components	Envelope	All exterior portions of a building such as windows, roofing, foundations, brick, caulking, etc.
	Interiors	All aspects of the inside finishes of the space such as ceilings, flooring, finish woodwork, paint, etc.
	Equipment & Furnishings	Includes building equipment such as food service, gym equipment, pool equipment, and spectator seating.
	Building Infrastructure Technology	Low Voltage Systems including fire alarm, security, access control, and data cabling.
	Site	All items that are not directly related to the buildings themselves such as storm sewer, athletic fields, playgrounds, and landscaping.

Category	Term	Definition
Taxes	Mill rate	<p>School district property taxes include levies for general operations, debt service, capital expansion and community services. Property values are equalized to reflect market value rather than local assessed value. The equalized levy rate is the total property tax levy divided by the current year equalized property value with tax incremental financing (TIF) values excluded. Levy rates are shown in "mills" or property tax dollars levied per \$1,000 of equalized property value. [Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction]</p> <p>It helps to think of the mill rate as the unit of tax. The mill rate is the total levy divided by the total property value. Rather than dividing the levy equally by the <i>number of taxpayers</i>, the levy is distributed equitably across <i>property values</i> by the unit rate--so an individual property taxpayer who owns a \$150,000 home pays the same rate of tax (\$12.86 per \$1,000 would be \$1,929) as a commercial property taxpayer who owns a \$750,000 business (\$9,645.)</p>

Q: What's the difference between heavy and light renovation and capital maintenance needs on the floor plans?

A:

Key	Item	Examples / Explanation
Diagonal (hatch) marks 	Capital Maintenance Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical systems upgrades and replacement • Plumbing fixture replacement • HVAC equipment
Light blue 	Light renovation	Replacement of finishes, flooring, ceiling, painting and casework (cabinetry) Includes visual and aesthetic improvements. These spaces will have the same configuration but will look new.
Dark blue 	Heavy renovation	Includes the reconfiguration of spaces. This may look like rooms being gutted, doors and walls moving, etc. In restrooms specifically, spaces would be potentially reconfigured to accommodate ADA access.
Orange 	New construction	New space from the ground up

Q: What is site capacity and why does it matter?

The Importance: Understanding a building's capacity is important because it indicates if a building is able to support the required programming. Ultimately the capacity of a building impacts the overall safety of the students and staff within the space.

The History: The number of students a school building can contain has changed throughout the years, and since buildings were originally constructed. Over time, state and federal mandates have added programming to public schools that was often not required when the buildings were constructed. Programs such as special education and full-day kindergarten were not required until the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. Even computer labs being introduced to public schools changes the capacity of schools.

How It's Calculated: Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA)'s team of engineers calculated the capacity of our schools in 3 ways:

- The Board of Education's prescribed students-to-teacher ratio and minimum/maximum class sizes
- Size and number of classrooms
- Overall square footage.

Takeaway: An overall theme from the capacity assessment is that all of our buildings are under maximum capacity and could either accommodate additional students OR would be able to accommodate the renovation of spaces.

Site Capacity and Site Size: River Bluff's site size (not site capacity), meaning the size of an acre for River Bluff, is less than half of the recommended site size. Understanding the limitations of size is important as it relates to the safety of pedestrians and vehicles on the site as well as the ability of the site to be able to support appropriate middle school activities, such as physical education fields and athletic fields. This is why a key question in our facilities discussions is: How can we gain more acreage at the River Bluff site?

PLAN-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: Would there be restrooms in/by the Kegonsa and Fox Prairie gym additions?

Restrooms would be included in the proposed gym additions at Kegonsa Elementary School and River Bluff Middle School.

At Fox Prairie Elementary School, the existing restrooms adjacent to the current cafeteria would be remodeled. New restrooms are not needed.

Q: When we're talking about rebuilding the maintenance shop? Would the assumption be that it would be in the same location?

Our goal at the River Bluff Middle School campus is to gain more space and acreage. One part of the solution may be rebuilding the maintenance shop on a different site, such as the district-owned Yahara site.

Q: The current Kegonsa Elementary School is approximately 56,000 square feet. Why is the proposed new Kegonsa approximately 80,000 square feet?

A: The newly constructed Kegonsa would serve 350 students and have larger square footage because it would include separate gym and cafeteria spaces, unlike the current Kegonsa which serves 300 students. In addition, modern school environments are designed differently than older schools, with more room for collaboration, small group instruction and flexible space.