

District: Somerville
School Name: East Somerville Community School
Category: Preferred Schematic
Date: January 27, 2010

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the City of Somerville, as part of its Invitation for Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design for the renovation of the East Somerville Community School to restore the facility as a K-8 school. MSBA staff has reviewed the City's proposed options for the East Somerville Community School, and accepts the City's preferred solution to proceed with the schematic design for the renovation of the existing 118,500 square foot facility as the most cost effective and educationally appropriate solution.

Background

On December 9, 2007, a fire in the southeast wing of the school damaged 18 classroom spaces, resulting in a loss of a classroom wing, while water and soot damage rendered the balance of the building uninhabitable. All 550 students and staff were relocated to four separate school facilities within the City. A Damage and Code Review Report commissioned by the City and conducted by Maguire Group, Inc., identifies and estimates a number of required and recommended repairs and upgrades related to fire damage, original code deficiencies and code upgrades.

The City has reported that it received \$12 million from its insurance carrier for damages and expenses related to the fire. The City used approximately \$2.8 million of these funds to reimburse teachers for the loss of personal property, relocate students and faculty to other facilities, and secure the damaged structure, leaving a total of approximately \$9.2 million for the renovation project. This remaining amount of approximately \$9.2 million would first be deducted from the project budget on which the MSBA would base any grant offered to the City for the proposed project, prior to the calculation and deduction of any additional ineligible costs and the application of the reimbursement rate.

The East Somerville Community School is a two-story, 118,500 square foot K-8 school that is approximately 37 years old and situated on 4.7 acres located within a residential neighborhood. City capital improvements to the facility in 1993 addressed the HVAC system and boilers, while portions of the roof were replaced in 1999. All other systems along with the windows and exterior/interior walls are original.

By letter dated January 14, 2009, the MSBA informed the City of Somerville that it could proceed with an Emergency Statement of Interest ("SOI") for the East Somerville Community School. The Emergency SOI, dated February 13, 2009 stated that the City's

goal for the proposed project is to return the currently displaced students to the East Somerville Community School and to restore the facility as a K-8 school.

On June 3, 2009, the MSBA Board of Directors approved staff’s recommendation to issue an invitation into the Feasibility Invitation category to further study potential solutions.

Discussion

MSBA staff has visited the East Somerville Community School, as well as seven other schools within the City to evaluate system capacity. Although the analysis indicated that excess capacity existed within the District, the City stressed the importance of accounting for major travel ways in an urban environment and the concerns it raises when assigning young students to a school, when considering a redistricting plan. The City stressed its need for all students displaced by the fire to return to their community school and focused on the importance of having the City’s existing UNIDOS program in one facility. The MSBA and the City have agreed to a proposed solution that would accommodate the specific needs of the UNIDOS program and a design enrollment of 500 students.

The City and their team considered and provided planning level estimates for three options, including:

Option	Overall Building	Renovated Space	New Space	Estimated Construction Cost
1. Renovation of the Existing Facility	118,500 SF \$203/SF	118,500 \$203/SF	N/A	\$24,107,000
2. Renovation & Addition	123,686 SF \$268/SF*	50,686 SF \$203/SF	73,000 sf \$308/SF	\$33,115,000
3. New Construction	98,000 SF \$325/SF*	N/A	98,000 SF \$320/SF	\$31,850,000

* Includes costs associated with demolition & removal of existing building area.

Based upon the cost estimates submitted by the City, the MSBA concurs that Option 1, the renovation of the existing school, is the most cost-effective solution as it is approximately \$5 to \$9 million dollars less expensive than Option 2, an addition/renovation totaling 123,686 square feet, and Option 3, a new building of 98,000 square feet.

Option 1 provides the City with the most cost-effective solution. Additionally, the building has existing spaces, such as program and community spaces, that would not be allowed under MSBA guidelines for a new facility and some of the existing spaces are larger than would be allowed under MSBA guidelines, such as the existing larger gym

and cafeteria. Accordingly, staff recommends that MSBA participate in the cost of a renovation to the existing building as detailed in Option One of approximately 91,000 gross square feet, which is the total gross square footage allowed by the MSBA's guidelines for a 500-student K-8 school, or as agreed upon by the MSBA to include the space associated with the agreed upon four additional classrooms and any proposed reallocation of spaces for Art and Music and Special Education currently under review, up to an amount not to exceed 98,000 gross square feet.

MSBA has reviewed the enrollment projection generated by the MSBA along with enrollment data and supporting materials submitted by the City and found:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed including an executed Initial Certificate of Compliance, the composition of the School Building Committee and the enrollment questionnaire.
- 2) MSBA has completed an enrollment projection utilizing the enrollment questionnaire completed by the City of Somerville, and has reviewed Somerville's existing school capacity as provided by the City. As agreed upon by the City, the MSBA enrollment projection supports an enrollment of 500 students for renovation of the East Somerville Community School.
- 3) MSBA reviewed the feasibility study materials and finds that the alternatives considered were sufficiently comprehensive in their scope and that the District's preferred option is reasonable and the most cost-effective solution.
- 4) The MSBA and the City have reviewed the space summary submission and have agreed to further refine their allocation of spaces as it relates to MSBA guidelines and observations, specifically in regard to Art and Music and Special Education, prior to proceeding into Schematic Design.
- 5) The City has agreed to submit an updated statement that describes costs expended to date on the proposed project and to provide documentation reconciling those expenditures with the total insurance settlement. The MSBA and the City have discussed the application of the insurance settlement to the project budget and have agreed that the proceeds would first be deducted from the project budget on which the MSBA would base any grant offered to the City, prior to the calculation and deduction of any additional ineligible costs and the application of the reimbursement rate.
- 6) MSBA staff will work with the City to establish a design budget and an understanding of MSBA financial participation for the construction project.

Based on the review outlined above, staff recommends that the City of Somerville be approved to proceed into schematic design for renovation of the existing East Somerville Community School.