

District: City of Springfield
 School Name: Elias Brookings Elementary School
 Recommended Category: Preferred Schematic
 Date: May 30, 2012

Recommendation

That the Executive Director be authorized to approve the City of Springfield, as part of its Invitation to Feasibility Study, to proceed into schematic design to replace the existing elementary school facility with a new Elias Brookings Elementary School on a new site, adjacent to the existing site. MSBA staff has reviewed the Feasibility Study and accepts the City's preferred solution to replace the existing elementary facility with a new Elias Brookings Elementary School on a new site, adjacent to the existing site, contingent upon the City securing full control and use of the proposed site.

District Information	
District Name	City of Springfield
Early Childhood Center	Margaret C. Ells (PK-1)
K-12 Facility	Springfield Academy for Excellence (K-12)
Elementary/Middle Schools	12 (PK-5) 18 (K-5) 1 (PK-8)
Middle Schools	7 (6-8)
Middle/High School	The Springfield Renaissance School (6-12)
High Schools	4 (9-12)
School Name	Elias Brookings Elementary School
Type of School	Elementary School
Grades Served	PK-5
Year Opened	1925
Total Square Footage	59,769
Additions	N/A
Acreage of Site	1.79acres
Building Issues	A tornado hit the building in June, 2011, and the District has identified deficiencies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural integrity - Mechanical systems - Electrical systems - Plumbing systems - Envelope - Windows - Roof
Original Design Capacity	Unknown
2011-2012 Enrollment	329
Agreed Upon Enrollment	320
Enrollment Specifics	The District and MSBA have mutually agreed upon a design enrollment of 320 students for grades K-5, for a project that will serve grades PK-5.

MSBA Board Votes	
Preferred Schematic Authorization	November 17, 2011
Updated Preferred Schematic Authorization	On June 6, 2012 Board agenda
Project Scope & Budget Authorization	District is targeting Board authorization on October 3, 2012
Reimbursement Rate Before Incentives	80.00%

Consultants	
Owner's Project Manager	Arcadis
Designer	Drummeey Rosane Anderson, Inc.

Discussion

The existing Elias Brookings Elementary School is a 56,668 square-foot, historically significant building on a relatively small constrained urban site. Prior to being damaged in June of 2011, the facility served grades PK-5.

The original school building was constructed in 1925. The District identified numerous deficiencies in the Statement of Interest. The existing facility requires structural and envelope repairs and improvements, system replacements, and accessibility upgrades.

On June 1, 2011, tornadoes struck portions of western Massachusetts, including the City of Springfield, causing damage to two schools within the District: the Elias Brookings Elementary School and the Mary A. Dryden Veterans Memorial School. Although the Elias Brookings Elementary School suffered substantial damage to the exterior envelope, roof, parapet, and windows, and to some interior walls, the District's initial assessment found that it was structurally sound.

Since June 2011, the District has been working to establish budgets for each project and has met with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and completed FEMA's Project Worksheets to determine what part of each project will be eligible for funding under FEMA guidelines. Although the District has confirmed with FEMA that portions of the work at both the Mary Dryden Veterans Memorial School and the Elias Brookings Elementary School will be eligible for reimbursement, FEMA's final funding level and reimbursement will not be available until the projects are complete.

During the Summer of 2011, the City's first priority was to make sure that the City had space for all of the displaced students for September, 2011, and that permanent solutions for both schools could be put in place as soon as feasible. Based on its initial assessments, the City believed that the renovation of the existing Elias Brookings Elementary School could be done within a two-year time frame. The City requested that the MSBA accept its preferred solution to renovate the Brookings within the existing footprint.

At its November 17, 2011 meeting, the Board authorized the City to proceed with schematic designs for both the Mary A. Dryden Veterans Memorial School and Elias Brookings Elementary

School. Since then, the City and its consultants have prepared construction documents for an addition and renovation project at the Mary A. Dryden Elementary School, which staff is recommending for a Project Scope and Budget Agreement under separate cover. The City and its consultants also conducted subsequent investigations of the Elias Brookings Elementary School, identified classroom spaces that are substantially smaller than current MSBA guidelines, and concluded that the work required to provide the spaces needed to support the City's educational plan would be more significant than originally envisioned. As a result, the City and its consultants solicited input from educators and administrators, performed a more comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions at the Elias Brookings Elementary School, and considered three preliminary options: a repair option, an addition/renovation configuration, and a new construction option.

The evaluation of the existing building and the development of a potential renovation option concluded that bringing the existing classrooms more in line with current MSBA guidelines would require the relocation of most of the interior partitions. In addition to increasing costs, enlarging the classrooms would reduce the total number of classrooms within the existing building, leading to the need for an addition of approximately 22,000 gross square feet to support delivery of the City's curriculum. The constrained urban site is not sufficient to accommodate an addition to the existing school.

The City and its consultants determined that an adjacent site on Walnut Street could be a potential location for the construction of a new facility to replace the existing elementary school. The City initiated the process of acquiring the proposed site through a land swap with Springfield College and the taking of a number of adjacent residential properties. While this process is still underway, the City has indicated that it does not foresee any issues in acquiring this land for development as the site of a new Elias Brookings Elementary School.

The City has selected new construction as the preferred solution to proceed into schematic design for the replacement of the Elias Brookings Elementary School on a nearby site. The City selected this solution as its preferred alternative because it best addresses the needs of the educational program by providing appropriately-sized learning spaces and an efficient facility that is more cost-effective to operate, and it mitigates the numerous building and site constraints present at the existing facility.

The District presented its proposed project to the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee ("FAS") on May 23, 2012. At that meeting, members of the FAS raised a number of concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed site for development, the status of the acquisition of the land for the project, and the level of anticipated contribution by FEMA. Members of the FAS also discussed with the City and its consultants the need for the City to fully understand the impact that these items, which are ineligible for reimbursement by the MSBA, will have on the MSBA's basis of grant and the City's share of the cost.

MSBA staff reviewed the conclusions of the submitted feasibility material and the enrollment data with the City and found:

- 1) All initial paperwork required has been processed, including an executed Initial Compliance Certification, the composition of the School Building Committee, and the enrollment information.

- 2) MSBA has completed an enrollment projection and has reached a mutual agreement with the City for a design enrollment of 320 for the Elias Brookings Elementary School.
- 3) MSBA staff reviewed the feasibility material and subsequent submittals and finds that the options investigated were sufficiently comprehensive in scope, the approach undertaken in this study was appropriate, and the City's preferred solution is reasonable and cost-effective and meets the needs identified by the City.
- 4) Pursuant to the MSBA's regulations, the site of an approved project must be owned (fee simple title) by the city, town, or regional school district that is seeking funding from the MSBA or be under the exclusive control of the city, town, or regional district pursuant to a long-term lease. Accordingly, before the MSBA can enter into a Project Funding Agreement with the City for the proposed project, the City must certify that it has full control and exclusive use of the proposed site either by fee simple title or long-term lease.
- 5) The City will submit an operational budget for educational objectives and a capital budget for MSBA review.
- 6) The City's schematic design submittal will be subject to final review and approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as part of the schematic design submittal prior to a Project Scope and Budget Agreement.
- 7) Subject to Board approval, the MSBA will participate in a project that includes spaces that meet MSBA guidelines, with the exception of variations previously agreed to by the MSBA. The MSBA will review all proposed spaces during the schematic design phase.
- 8) As discussed with the City and its consultants, the City needs to fully understand the MSBA's Project Funding Agreement and policies regarding funding for site-related costs. Costs associated with the mitigation of hazardous materials and the acquisition of property are ineligible for MSBA reimbursement; the MSBA may participate in other site costs up to a cap of 8% of building costs. In addition, the City must understand the use of budget contingencies that will be established in the next phase of the project and how these policies impact the City's share of project costs.
- 9) As part of the Schematic Design phase, the City will work with the MSBA to determine a mutually agreeable methodology to differentiate eligible costs from ineligible costs.
- 10) The City shall continue to work with FEMA and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency ("MEMA") and provide any and all information that FEMA and/or MEMA may require or request, to ensure and maximize FEMA funding.
- 11) The MSBA understands that the amount of funding that the City receives from FEMA for the Elias Brookings Elementary School building may be apportioned and capped based on FEMA's rules for an "alternate project." The City has indicated that it will apply the FEMA money it receives for the existing Brookings Elementary School facility to the proposed new project in the form of an alternate project, and the City understands that the MSBA will reduce the total project budget accordingly.

12) Pursuant to the MSBA's regulations, 963 CMR 2.09(6), the total amount of FEMA funding and any other third-party funding that the City receives shall be deducted from the total amount of MSBA-eligible project costs, and the remaining amount of eligible project costs shall be apportioned between the MSBA and the District according to the applicable reimbursement rate, as determined by the MSBA.

Based on the review outlined above, as well as information that MSBA has received from the District, staff recommends that the City of Springfield be approved to proceed into schematic design to replace the existing Elias Brookings Elementary School with the construction of a new facility on a new site..