

The City's only public high school has served Staunton's students well for many years and has now exceeded its natural life due to age, wear and tear, and the evolution of technology and instructional programs. We recognize that it no longer provides a suitable environment for a modern-day education.

Built as a junior high school 51 years ago, the building was not designed to accommodate today's high school students and their activities, despite periodic upgrades over the last three decades. Patching the problem areas with yet another addition or modest renovation is no longer a practical or cost-effective solution. It's time to give the building an extensive facelift and provide students the opportunity to learn and thrive in the school they deserve.

### **The New Staunton High School**

Debuting in the fall of 2020, this 21<sup>st</sup>-century campus designed by architects Crabtree, Rohrbaugh & Associates will feature bright, open space to inspire collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.

The entire high school will be revitalized and contain approximately 100,000 square feet of new construction and about 80,000 square feet of renovated space.

The new Staunton High School will highlight a student-friendly and inclusive environment, encouraging participation in the arts and athletics, strengthening college and career pathways, and providing the modern-day, technology-rich academic experience that students and their families expect as they prepare for life after high school.

Classrooms will be 33% larger at 800 square feet. That means more space for collaboration and hands-on learning.

Hallways will be wider, increasing from 10 to 22 feet. Those spacious corridors will allow for flexible, technology-infused learning spaces just outside the classroom door.

A total of \$100,000 in high school innovation grants are funding the flexible learning spaces, plus providing new course offerings for students. Staunton's high school is one of just five in Virginia to receive the innovation grants.

**For a closer look at the features of the future Staunton High School, see the final page.**



*Top: Aerial view of the future Staunton High School.*

*Bottom: Front view of the new classroom wing.*

## **A Worthwhile Investment**

The School Board will ask Staunton City Council to invest no more than \$46 million in the project. That's a slight increase from the \$40 million City Council initially earmarked for the project in 2017.

**The good news is, the City will not have to raise tax rates to accommodate the increased project budget.**

Thanks to lower than expected interest rates on the bonds, the City can increase debt financing on the project without raising tax rates to fund it. Also, the tax rates increased for meals, real estate and personal property in 2017 will sufficiently cover a \$46 million project. Finally, should the project cost less than \$46 million, the City will only borrow what it needs.

Essential items covered in the project budget include:

- New classroom wing
- New administrative and health section
- New auxiliary gym
- Renovated existing gym, auditorium and cafeteria
- Demolition of existing classroom wings
- Parking facilities, site work and excavation
- Stormwater construction
- All architectural and engineering fees
- Capital equipment and furnishings
- Cost of issuing the bonds

The new budget will fund a school that will serve Staunton's students well for decades to come, and serve as a point of pride for the entire community.

## **Why the Budget is Increasing**

The reason for the budget increase is simple: Overall construction costs have gone up 6.5% since City Council approved funding for the project two years ago. Specifically, aluminum, steel and labor prices have skyrocketed, and we must be prepared with a cushion to help offset cost increases for the duration of the 18-month project.

Aerial view of the future Staunton High School.

