

January 25, 2017 – Board Anticipates Significant Improvements for Lee High with \$40 Million

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Board Anticipates Significant Improvements for Lee High with \$40 Million

(STAUNTON, VA – January 25, 2017) City Council’s recent proposal to earmark \$40 million for the Robert E. Lee High School project in the 2017-2021 Capital Investment Plan is giving the Staunton City School Board reason to be optimistic. While this figure will not support the facility that the Board had envisioned with its March 2015 vote for a new high school on a new location with all necessary athletic fields, it is enthusiastic about the many critical needs that could be addressed should City Council approve the funding.

“We can accomplish a great deal with \$40 million, and we would be grateful to have the ability to make extensive improvements,” said School Board Chair, Ron Ramsey. “The Board still believes in its decision for a new high school as being the best overall choice for the future education of our students, however we also are well-aware that this is a massive project and that consideration of an expenditure of this magnitude requires thoughtful and informed conversations among City leaders and stakeholders. The Board is appreciative of City Council’s ongoing collaboration and understands that the Council must weigh a wide range of additional factors in making decisions that best meet the needs of all its citizens. This project is a great example of how our two bodies work together for our community.”

Major items that would likely be high on the list of priorities for the high school renovation include:

Instructional Upgrades

- Creating larger class sizes to accommodate both the number of students and the workspace needs of individual students (for laptops or tablets, basic supplies, etc.)
- Allowing for individual and collaborative planning and work space for the teaching staff
- Creating flexible learning spaces for small group instruction, student project work, and collaboration among students and classes
- Providing the various required spaces to meet the needs of the special education programs
- Ensuring functional spaces are available to meet the new requirements of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate
- Connecting the two existing wings and including in the connector space contemporary lab spaces for science and career and technical education (CTE) classes
- Redesigning and updating the library to make it more user-friendly

Building & Property Upgrades

- Redesigning the main entrance for better flow of student traffic in and out of the building which will enhance efforts to create secure entryways in all buildings
- Expanding the current gymnasium to meet the current standards for gymnasium sizes as published by the National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS)
- Adding a second or auxiliary gymnasium to meet the growing needs of student athletes
- Providing a wrestling room and a fitness room
- Creating space for conference rooms
- Improving accessibility to all areas of the building consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines
- Installing new HVAC systems, including replacement of ductwork to ensure proper air quality
- Bringing all systems into compliance with current code requirements, including fire suppression, lighting, and removal of any hazardous materials such as asbestos or lead paint, etc.
- As much as possible, creating a green, sustainable design to reduce energy usage through replacement of windows and doors, installation of LED lights, installation of new water-saving plumbing fixtures, etc.
- Updating the clinic area to address the need for additional space, as well as privacy and increased security
- Separating the bus and parent drop-off areas to improve traffic flow and safety
- Addressing the visual presence of the facility in an effort to align with the City's historic nature and characteristics

School Board member Robert Boyle said: “A much-needed major renovation will create internal and external additions and upgrades that offer a desirable facility and the best opportunities for our students to learn and succeed. It will raise the level of preparedness and pride in our students and our community.”

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