



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
FROM: Jason Graham, Council Member, Ward 1
RE: Resolution in Support of Construction of a New School
DATE: May 4, 2021 (for May 11, 2021 City Council Meeting)

ISSUE

City Council is asked to adopt a resolution in support of the construction of a new school.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the attached resolution come before City Council for discussion, consideration, and potential changes. I further recommend that after any amendments are considered and made, the final version of the resolution be adopted by the City Council on May 25, 2021, along with the remainder of the capital improvements plan.

BACKGROUND

The School Board of the Fredericksburg City Public Schools requested, at the April 13, 2021 City Council meeting, that the City Council advance the construction of a new school. I recommend that we adopt a formal resolution that responds to the request.

The attached resolution acknowledges the School Board's primary role in programming and constructing the new school. The resolution incorporates the following:

1) Timeline

The resolution sets a target of having a new school open in the summer of 2024, which is three years from now. This is a major capital project that will be part of our community for many decades, and the resolution acknowledges that the time to procure, design, and construct this project may require additional months to complete. The resolution requests that the School Board work to provide the preliminary programming work by December of 2021 so that the City would have it available for the FY 2023 budget process.

2) Task Force

The resolution requests that a new joint City Council / School Board task force be re-engaged to maintain open communications and provide input on important decisions that will be part of the programming and preliminary design process.

3) Preliminary cost estimates

The resolution requests that the School Board complete programming and design work to

the point of preparing preliminary cost estimates for both construction and operations.

4) Energy efficiency in design

The resolution requests that the School Board utilize a design team familiar with best practices in renewable energy and energy efficiency in large buildings, consistent with the City Council's vision for a 100% renewable energy future. (Resolution 19-112)

5) Community shared-use

The resolution requests that the School Board utilize a design that provides for easy access by the community for certain portions of the building during appropriate non-school hours, in accordance with FCPS policies.

6) Cash savings target

The resolution also provides for a cash-savings target of at least \$6 million in fund balance, including proffers, between the City and the FCPS to help lower the debt that will need to be issued for this project. The final amount of savings would vary depending upon the final term and interest rates of any debt that is issued, but an early estimate is that cash savings of \$6 million would reduce debt service payments by \$350,000 annually.

FISCAL IMPACT

The current version of the City's budget includes an amount of \$1 million to accomplish programming work, site selection, and preparing preliminary estimates of construction costs and operating costs for the new school.

The cost of a new school will vary significantly based upon a variety of factors, including programming, size, site and site conditions, construction environment, and interest rates. Current estimates of capital and operating costs show that once the school is open, tax revenue will need to be higher than the current level by between \$0.07 and \$0.09 cents per \$100 valuation.

Attachment: Resolution



**May 11, 2021
Regular Meeting
Resolution 21-**

MOTION:

SECOND:

RE: Support for Construction of a New School

ACTION: APPROVED: Ayes: 0; Nays: 0

The Fredericksburg City Public Schools have requested that the City Council support the construction of a new school. The Fredericksburg City Public Schools has the primary responsibility for programming, design, and construction of a new school, but the City Council must provide and appropriate funds for this purpose. City Council wishes to express support for the project.

Therefore, the City Council hereby resolves the following.

- 1) The City Council requests that the School Board prepare a plan and program, including preliminary cost estimates, for a new school no later than December 2021;
- 2) The City Council further requests that the School Board re-establish a joint task force with the City Council to work with the community to enhance public dialogue on the project plan and program; and
- 3) The City Council hereby affirms Council Member Matthew J. Kelly and Mayor Mary Katherine Greenlaw to the joint task force; and
- 4) The City Council also acknowledges and supports the goal of opening a new school in the summer of 2024 (fiscal year 2025); and
- 5) The City Council requests that the School Board utilize a design that provides for best practices in renewable energy and efficiency in large buildings, consistent with the City Council's vision for a 100% renewable energy future; and
- 6) The City Council requests that the School Board utilize a design that provides for easy access by the community for certain portions of the building during non-school hours, as appropriate and in accordance with FCPS community-use policies; and
- 7) The City Council sets a financial target of at least \$6 million in available cash balances, either from FCPS funds or City funds, to offset future bond issues for this project.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent from Vote:

Absent from Meeting:

Clerk's Certificate

I certify that I am Clerk of Council of the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and that the foregoing is a true copy of Resolution No. 21-__, adopted at a meeting of the City Council held Date, 2021, at which a quorum was present and voted.

Tonya B. Lacey, MMC
Clerk of Council