

BOND UPDATE #75

09.04.20

Here's what's been going on this week:

1. We have received the first draft of the Design Development construction cost estimate from Cornerstone, and we are expecting the independent cost estimate from RLB (Rider, Levett, Bucknall) later this week. The project team is now going through the cost estimates in detail to make sure the two estimates are reconciled. The draft estimate from Cornerstone shows that we are currently over budget, so we will be putting in significant effort to identify all areas where costs can be reduced. We expect to complete a fully reconciled construction cost estimate by the end of September.
2. The two areas that have inflated costs the most are mechanical systems and stormwater detention. In regards to the stormwater detention system, we are severely constrained by the fall and finish grade. (In other words, on our flat site we don't have very much room to get the necessary slope on the pipes for water to flow properly.) That, combined with the very high ground water table, makes the system extremely challenging to design. The engineers are working hard to figure out alternate methods that can reduce costs while still meeting regulatory requirements.
3. Approximately \$4 million of the budget for the new Ferndale High School facility has been set aside for what, in the construction business, is called FF&E. That stands for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment -- everything from the industrial appliances in the kitchen to the chairs in the classrooms, from the tools in the CTE shops to the cots in the nurse's office, from the bookcases in the learning commons to the paper towel dispensers in the washrooms. While we plan to reuse whatever we can from the current Ferndale High School facility, much of the existing FF&E is as old and worn out as the building itself. So there will be a lot we need to purchase. Since procuring FF&E for our high school project is not included in the architects' scope of work, we made the decision this past week to engage the services of a subsidiary of CSG (Construction Services Group) that specializes in handling FF&E -- from planning to sourcing to scheduling deliveries to managing warranties. After doing our research, we came to the conclusion that the fee we will pay CSG for this service will be offset by the savings we will realize by employing experts who know how to get what we need at the best prices.
4. As I mentioned above, most of the furnishings and equipment in the new high school will be new, but not all of it. We are currently working with CTE staff to evaluate what portion of the existing shop equipment can (and should) be moved to the new school. This evaluation will consider both safety and operational issues. The information we glean from this process will also help us ensure the mechanical and electrical systems are designed properly for equipment installation.

5. Our contractor is preparing to get the roof repairs underway at Vista. (As you may recall, \$4 million of the \$112 million bond passed by voters in 2019 was designated for specific critical maintenance needs. Among the highest priorities on that list of needs were projects aimed at repairing building envelopes. A building envelope is “the physical separator between the conditioned and unconditioned environment of a building, including the resistance to air, water, heat, light, and noise transfer.” In other words, repairs to roofs, windows, cracks in the foundation, and so on.) This past week, the preparation for the roof repair at Vista has involved the placement of a series of fluorescent orange stanchions strewn with white flags. (I included a picture below.) One District student mused that it looked like a go-cart track on top of the school. The Vista roof work will begin in earnest next Tuesday (September 8).



This is our 75th bond update since the Ferndale community gave a thumbs up to our bond measure at the ballot box in February 2019. That was a little less than 19 months ago, when none of us could have imagined the world in which we are currently living.

We have faced many challenges in those 19 months, including a failed operations levy, the layoff of nearly 150 employees, a pandemic that has required us to completely reinvent our education system, and a country and community worn down by health concerns, financial strains, racial tension, and political strife. Despite all of these challenges, we feel proud of the fact that our bond projects are progressing on time and as promised -- and they will also be on budget. Thank you for following our efforts by reading these weekly bond updates.

As always, please reach out to me or one of my colleagues if you have questions.

Linda