

St. Cloud Tech High School
Facility Observations and Cost Opinion

Facility Observation Report for Purposes of Reviewing Estimated Renovation Costs

June 2, 2016

R.A. Morton, Construction Managers, was asked by the St. Cloud Public School District to perform a facility renovation cost review for Tech High School. The intent of this cost review is to provide a basis to evaluate and provide commentary related to possible facility improvement costs. On May 25, 2016 members of the team toured the district's facility. General floor plan information was provided by District staff.

No assessment reports were completed by the District Architect or Construction Manager. Thus, the following information is based on the limited information available. A complete facility assessment would be required to accurately assess the mechanical, electrical and structural conditions of the existing building. An educational assessment would be required to assess the flow, function and viability of educational programming of any renovations completed.

Building Deficiency Observations

The existing building was observed for potential deficiencies in the following areas. These observations are considered "General Overview and Best Case," appropriate for consideration in the renovation cost review process.

- I. Regulatory Issues
 - A. Barrier-Free Accessibility (ADA) Compliance: Elevators, lifts, restrooms, locker rooms, door hardware, door widths and accessible stations at FACS, Art and Science.
 - B. Fire Marshal / Building Code / Life Safety Compliance: Fire sprinkling, ventilation and fresh air standards, exiting and stairway conditions.
 - C. Other Regulatory Issues: Kitchen finishes, concessions, cabinetry and gender equity.

- II. Building Maintenance Issues
 - A. Mechanical / Electrical Systems: Most systems appear to be beyond their typical life expectancy. In addition, the systems are not energy efficient.
 - B. Building Envelope: exterior walls, doors, roof and window areas should be addressed.
 - C. Interior Finishes and Equipment: ceilings, restroom finishes, flooring should be addressed.
 - D. Hazardous Material Abatement: There was no review of existing material to be abated. Refer to the District abatement consultant.
 - E. Other Maintenance Issues: Sidewalk, parking lot, landscaping and site drainage.

- III. Educational Issues: Many of the current classrooms appear to smaller than the MDE recommended areas for their current use, however that can depend on individual class sizes.

General Conclusions

Building renovations can be effective and efficient in many circumstances for school construction. Every situation is unique; however, the Minnesota Department of Education has available a Guide for Planning School Construction Projects. Section 2.06 (See Attachment A) offers direction on what considerations should be included in studying the viability of renovation vs. new construction. It has been RA Morton's experience with working with Public School District' over the last 30 years that renovating facilities can be very viable if the building condition, structure and educational programming can support today's educational needs. Our experience has also indicated that many of the area school buildings built between 1900 – 1950 are challenges for renovation and the associated costs are prohibitive to the district needs. Those projects have found it better to demolish their older buildings and build new additions (ROCORI, Fergus Falls, Sibley East, Montgomery-Lonsdale, Cedar Mountain, Lyle, Chatfield).

It is our opinion that the Tech High School building can be viable for other community or re-development purposes but has gracefully outlived its effective purpose for educational programs without substantial cost and phasing challenges to renovate.

Anticipated Renovation Costs:

RA Morton's cost review is based on the information provided by District Staff and our observations from the 5/25/16 walkthrough. Our findings are our opinion based on this information and is not intended to represent firm renovation costs. A full facility assessment and educational plan are needed to accomplish a detailed estimate of probable cost. Our opinion of the information available indicates the cost to renovate and update mechanical/electrical systems is \$78,000,000. This does not include cost associated with major reconfiguration of educational programming space.

ATTACHMENT A

Guide for Planning School Construction Projects Section II.

Part 2.06 Renovate an Existing School or Build a New School?

The answer to this key question is not clear and simple, and it requires a detailed and time consuming analysis of many factors. The commissioner must consider both the economic and the educational advisability of a proposed school construction project; hence, both an economic and educational perspective on what is best educationally for students and economically for taxpayers of the community and the state are necessary.

The more “yes” answers there are to the following questions, the greater the likelihood that a school facility in its entirety is not adequate for current student, staff, program, and community needs, and needs to be replaced:

- ◆ Does the school district have too many school facilities for the numbers of students?
- ◆ Are there student safety issues (e.g. student and bus drop-off) on the school site?
- ◆ Is the school site too small to meet current needs for parking and outdoor activities?
- ◆ Is it very difficult or impossible to solve school site issues by closing streets and/or purchasing adjacent properties?
- ◆ Are their major exterior issues such as leaking roofs, groundwater penetration, sagging walls, mold, and brick in need of repair or replacement?
- ◆ Are major portions of the school greater than 50 years old and/or in poor condition?
- ◆ Are there many additions to the school over the years, and are learning and support spaces separated that should be clustered together?
- ◆ Are major portions of the school inaccessible to students with disabilities and adults?
- ◆ Does the school have indoor health and safety issues such as poor indoor air quality, fire safety, and mold?
- ◆ Does the school have mold, asbestos, water penetration, or other issues behind exterior or interior surfaces the cost of which to repair or replace is difficult to estimate without special engineering studies?
- ◆ Are general classrooms, specialized areas (labs, shops, music, art, physical education, and special education), multipurpose areas, and support spaces (e.g. storage, conference spaces) insufficient for current needs?
- ◆ Are there many load-bearing walls, wood floors, and other design features that make renovation of the school difficult and expensive?
- ◆ Are the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems in poor condition?
- ◆ Is lighting insufficient and/or do the windows, ceilings, and walls need replacement?
- ◆ Is further wiring for technology costly because of the age and/or design of the school?
- ◆ Is the student enrollment either too small or too large for the capacity of the facility?
- ◆ Are school operational and maintenance costs high?
- ◆ Are community use spaces in the school few or insufficient for current needs?
- ◆ Are the high costs of renovating the school, the unpredictability of renovation costs, and the disadvantages of continuing to use it as a school clear and understandable?
- ◆ Are the concerns of supporters of the school centered on issues other than how the facility can best

improve student learning and teaching, and help prepare students for their future?

- ◆ Does the school have good potential for reuse? Is there a viable reuse option for the school? Guide for
- ◆ Are the reasons for replacing the school and the advantages of building a new school clear and understandable?
- ◆ Does the school district have the bonding capacity to build a new school?
- ◆ Will the school likely be serving students for the life of the bond issue?

The facilities and organization team uses the architectural guideline that when the estimated costs of renovating/improving a school facility approach 60% of the cost of replacing the facility, a school district needs to replace the facility. In a proposed renovation project, a school district is expected to bring the facility up to current codes and address educational deficiencies as well. Architects estimate that the construction cost of a facility is one-seventh to one-tenth of its cost during its life cycle. The remaining costs of a facility are operations and maintenance costs. The State of Minnesota pays, on average, for over 85% of those operations and maintenance costs.

If the need to replace the school facility is not relatively self-evident, it may be necessary for school staff and consultants to assess existing school facilities and sites in detail using the criteria outlined in Part 2.04. A consulting architect or engineer will need to provide a detailed analysis of the estimated costs for necessary and desired renovations/improvements and develop comparative life cycle, cost-benefit analyses for all school construction alternatives under consideration. **Potential problems involving mold, asbestos, and water penetration hidden behind roofs, walls, ceilings, and floors can require great cost and time to repair or replace, and can disrupt the existing school project budget and timelines. It is very important to get an accurate estimate of abatement, repair, or replacement costs for all such issues.** The timing and scheduling of a school construction project also has cost implications due to the changing costs of equipment, materials, and labor. **In general, the greater the gap between the present value of the renovated facility versus a replacement facility, as well as the actual versus desired site size, the less advisable it is to expand on the existing facility and site.**