


MEMORANDUM

April 14, 2010

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
Education Committee

FROM: Essie McGuire, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **FY11-16 Capital Improvements Program, Cost Sharing: MCG Project – Old Blair Auditorium**

Today the Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education Committees will review the County Executive's FY11-16 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Project Cost Sharing: MCG. The Committees will specifically review the FY11 funding recommendation related to the Old Blair Auditorium Project. Within the Cost Sharing: MCG Project, the County Executive's March 29 transmittal recommended a total of \$600,000 in GO Bond funding for the Old Blair Auditorium Project. The amended Project Description Form (PDF) is attached on circles 1-2.

Representatives from the Montgomery County Public Schools, the County Office of Management and Budget, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and the Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc, are expected to attend today's worksession.

BACKGROUND

In the FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), the Council approved \$25,000 for MCPS to conduct a feasibility study for the renovation of the auditorium at the Sligo Creek Elementary School/Silver Spring International Middle School. The CIP also reflected (in the County Government's Cost Sharing: MCG project) that \$600,000 in State bond bill funding may be available for the renovation of the auditorium, if conditions are met.

The resulting feasibility study report recommended four options for the Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School. The Committees reviewed the report and the four options on October 22, 2009. The Committee did not make any recommendations at that time but raised two primary points.

1. The Committee discussed the ongoing maintenance for a renovated facility. MCPS staff indicated that if the auditorium were renovated for school use as indicated in the feasibility study options, it would likely operate similar to other facility use arrangements currently in place through the Interagency Coordinating Board. If so, MCPS would pay for operating costs related to school use, and Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) would organize community use and reimburse MCPS for the associated operating costs.

2. The Committee requested information from the Arts and Humanities Council on the need for and potential use of an additional arts/theater space in the area if the Old Blair Auditorium were renovated.

FEASIBILITY STUDY OPTIONS

The feasibility study identified four options for renovating the space. All options include the minimum work required to bring the space and its systems up to code. Each option also identifies a set of alternates, which include upgrades to the mechanical and theater systems.

The Executive Summary (circles 8-9) summarizes the options and the base construction costs. The following pages more fully describe each option with a discussion of pros and cons and a summary cost table with base and alternate construction cost elements. On circle 32, MCPS estimates the total project cost for each option, which assumes construction of the upgrade alternate packages and adds necessary costs for planning and design, contingency, and furniture and equipment.

Council staff prepared the brief summary table below for quick comparison:

Option	Scope	Base Cost	Alternate Cost	Constr. Cost w/ Alternate	Total Project Cost
Option 1 (c)14-17	840 seat auditorium 2 classrooms	\$4,860,772	\$860,062	\$5,720,834	\$6,899,772
Option 2 (c)19-21	750 seat auditorium w/ side balcony areas, addtl ADA seating 2 classrooms	\$4,946,992	\$860,062	\$5,807,054	\$7,000,218
Option 3 (c)22-25	750 seat auditorium w/ side balcony areas, lobby, elevator, addtl ADA seating 4 classrooms	\$5,602,792	\$750,000	\$6,352,792	\$7,636,003
Option 4 (c)26-29	800 seat auditorium w/balcony, lobby, elevator 3 classrooms	\$6,273,408	\$750,000	\$7,023,408	\$8,417,270

The feasibility committee recommended either Option 3 or Option 4 as best meeting the programmatic goals for the project. Circle 31 details that while Option 3 was the primary recommendation, Option 4 was determined to have similar merit and should also be considered.

ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL ASSESSMENT

In response to the Committees' request, Suzan Jenkins, CEO of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHC), forwarded the attached memorandum "Assessment of Needs for Performing Arts Spaces Since 'Creative Montgomery' – the 2001 Cultural Plan" (circles 33-35). The memorandum:

- Provides an update of facilities that have opened since 2001 that have some capacity for rental usage. Five primary facilities are identified, including the Olney Theater; Round House

Theater; BlackRock Center for the Arts; Performing Arts Center at Montgomery College in Silver Spring; and the Arts Barn in the Kentlands;

- Discusses the growth in nonprofit arts and humanities groups in the County, and observes that “the largest growth spurt is occurring in small and mid-size organizations”;
- Notes some of the challenges associated with performance space at a school; and
- Concludes that the Old Blair project may have school and community benefit, but should not be considered to be an arts facility.

Council staff notes that in addition to the recently opened facilities detailed in the AHC assessment, the Council chambers in the Takoma Park City Hall are being renovated to double as performing arts space. Suzanne Ludlow, Takoma Park Deputy City Manager, reports that the renovation is nearly complete, and that the chambers will seat approximately 154 with additional seats for persons with disabilities. The chambers will have the ability to convert to an open stage area.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE FY11 RECOMMENDATION

The County Executive’s January 15 CIP submission stated in the Cost Sharing: MCG Project, “In FY11-16, this project provides for \$1.5 million per year in Arts Facility financing to ensure an available source of funding for capital improvements for County arts organizations”. On March 29, the Executive transmitted an amended PDF for the Cost Sharing: MCG project, in which he specified his recommended fund allocation for FY11. This amended PDF is attached on circles 1-2 and states that in FY11, \$600,000 of the arts facility financing (funded with GO Bonds) is for the Old Blair Auditorium Project, “To provide matching funds to assist with rehabilitation/ maintenance to prevent further deterioration in the former Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium”.

State Bond Bill: A total of \$600,000 is available in two State bond bills on behalf of the Old Blair Auditorium Project. The matching requirement is that OBAP must demonstrate proof of matching funds by June 1, 2011. The funds do not need to be spent before that date.

In the 2010 Legislative Session, the General Assembly approved an extension of the matching deadline for the bond bills to June 1, 2012 (adopted language attached at circle 36). The fiscal and policy note is attached at circles 37-38, and gives some additional background and detail on the bond bill requirements. Council staff contacted staff at the State Department of Legislative Services (DLS) to confirm additional details about the bond bill requirements.

The bond bill states that the funds are “for the repair, renovation, construction, reconstruction, and capital equipping of the Old Blair High School Auditorium in located in Silver Spring”. The State provides its bond bill funding as reimbursement only after the funds have been expended. Council staff also understands that the matching requirement could be met by programming funds in FY11. However, the State also has a seven year time limit on expenditure of funds which has not been extended to date. This expenditure time limit would also expire on June 1, 2012. The expenditure clock could be extended by the General Assembly in the next session to accommodate any expenditure schedule the Council might program.

Scope of work: The Executive’s recommendation states that the programmed funds would be to assist with repair and maintenance of the auditorium. Given the feasibility study options in the report, it is clear that the combined State and County match of \$1.2 million would not be sufficient to

complete any of this renovation work. MCPS staff has stated that \$1.2 million would not be sufficient to accomplish even the level of repairs necessary to bring the facility to code compliance. MCPS staff has also stated that while the interior of the auditorium continues to decline, its condition does not impact the surrounding schools.

If basic repair and maintenance work is not needed to stabilize the facility and the recommended funds are insufficient to accomplish any functional renovation, Council staff does not support the Executive's recommended funding level of \$600,000 for FY11. It does not appear to be a realistic or necessary expenditure of funds given the practical parameters of the project.

Prior Council action: The MCG: Cost Sharing Project contains the original language the Council approved in FY06 related to the Old Blair Auditorium:

"The Old Blair Auditorium Project (a private, non-profit organization) received State bond bill funding of \$600,000 for the renovation of the Old Blair High School Auditorium. In FY06-07 the County provided \$190,000 as a partial match for the State funds with \$50,000 in current revenue for DPWT to develop a Program of Requirements and cost estimate for the project, and bond funded expenditure of \$140,000 to pay for part of the construction. The Council will consider appropriating the \$140,000 after: a) facility planning is complete and the full cost of the renovation is known; b) the County, MCPS, and the Old Blair Auditorium Project resolve issues about management of the renovation project, operation of the facility, and parking for the facility; and c) the Old Blair High School Auditorium Project raises the remaining \$410,000 required to match the State funding."

As this language indicates, an amount of \$140,000 for this project had been programmed and counted against Spending Affordability Guidelines in a prior year. Therefore, the Council could now bring the funds forward to FY11 or later in the FY11-16 CIP without counting further against the guidelines. Since the criteria for appropriation appear to be outdated, the PDF would have to be amended to remove the outdated language and reflect the Committee's decisions for the FY11-16 time period.

ED COMMITTEE CHAIR RECOMMENDATION

Education Committee Chair Ervin wrote a memorandum to the Education and HHS Committees (attached on circles 39-40) requesting that the Committees consider programming between \$7.6 million and \$8.4 million in a separate PDF for the Elizabeth Stickley (Old Blair) Auditorium renovation as a multi-use facility. The funding range relates to either Option 3 or Option 4 as outlined in the feasibility study.

Cost Sharing: MCG -- No. 720601

Category
Subcategory
Administering Agency
Planning Area

Culture and Recreation
Recreation
Recreation
Countywide

Date Last Modified
Required Adequate Public Facility
Relocation Impact
Status

March 15, 2010
No
None.
On-going

EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY09	Est. FY10	Total 6 Years	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design, and Supervision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	21,943	3,171	5,172	13,600	6,100	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	0
Total	21,943	3,171	5,172	13,600	6,100	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	0

FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

Contributions	150	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	0	0
Current Revenue: General	6,753	3,171	1,182	2,400	150	250	500	500	500	500	0
G.O. Bonds	7,190	0	140	7,050	1,800	1,250	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
Long-Term Financing	3,850	0	3,850	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Aid	4,000	0	0	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21,943	3,171	5,172	13,600	6,100	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	0

DESCRIPTION

This project provides funds for the development of non-government projects in conjunction with public agencies or the private sector. County participation leverages private and other public funds for these facilities. Prior to disbursing funds, the relevant County department or agency and the private organization will develop a Memorandum of Understanding, which specifies the requirements and responsibilities of each. In FY11-16, this project provides for \$1.5 million per year in Arts Facilities financing to ensure an available source of funding for capital improvements for County arts organizations.

COST CHANGE

Increase due to the addition of Arts facility financing for Old Blair Auditorium, Olney Theatre, and the County's participation in CHI Center, Inc., Ivy Mount School, Inc., Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, Inc., and State Aid for the music venue in Silver Spring.

JUSTIFICATION

The County has entered into or considered many public-private partnerships, which contribute to the excellence and diversity of facilities serving County residents.

OTHER

Economic Development:

The State approved \$4,000,000 in State Aid for the music venue in Silver Spring. The County's required match is \$4,000,000 and \$3,850,000 is currently programmed. The Venue Operator has agreed to purchase certain furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the project; \$150,000 of which will be used as the required County match. An agreement between the development partners and the County has been executed. The project is currently in the design phase. Necessary land-use approvals will be sought, after which time the project will move into the construction phase.

Grants:

For FY09, County participation was for the following projects:

Aunt Hattie's Place, Inc.: \$250,000

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington: \$250,000

CASA de Maryland, Inc.: \$150,000

CHI Centers: \$50,000

Institute for Family Development Inc., doing business as Centro Familia: \$75,000. The organization must demonstrate to the County's satisfaction that it has commitments for the entire funding needed to construct the project before the \$75,000 in County funds can be spent.

Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington, Inc.: \$250,000

Montgomery General Hospital: \$500,000

Nonprofit Village, Inc.: \$200,000, and

YMCA of Metropolitan Washington and Youth and Family Services Branch: \$200,000

For FY10, County participation was for the following projects:

Aunt Hattie's Place, Inc.: \$100,000. Disbursement of FY09 and FY10 County funds is conditioned on the owner of the property giving the County an

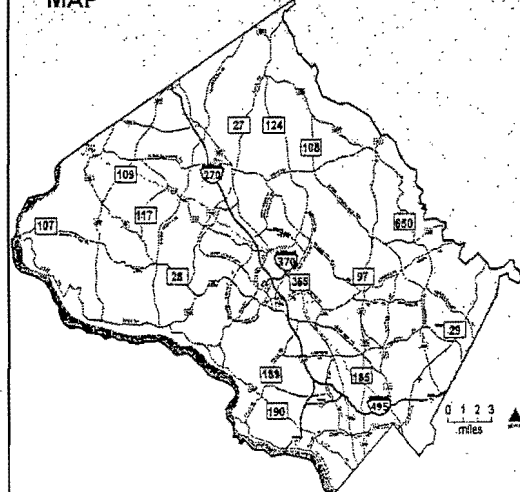
APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA

Date First Appropriation	FY08	(\$000)
First Cost Estimate		
Current Scope	FY11	21,643
Last FY's Cost Estimate		8,343
Appropriation Request	FY11	6,100
Appropriation Request Est.	FY12	1,500
Supplemental Appropriation Request		0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		8,203
Expenditures / Encumbrances		4,145
Unencumbered Balance		4,058
Partial Closeout Thru	FY08	0
New Partial Closeout	FY09	0
Total Partial Closeout		0

COORDINATION

Private organizations
State of Maryland
Municipalities
Montgomery County Public Schools
Community Use of Public Facilities
Department of General Services
Department of Economic Development

MAP



Cost Sharing: MCG -- No. 720601 (continued)

appropriate covenant restricting the use of the leased property to a foster home for boys for a period of ten years from the time the facility commences to operate as a foster home.

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington: \$38,000

CASA de Maryland, Inc.: \$100,000

Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington, Inc.: \$50,000, and

Warren Historic Site Committee, Inc.: \$150,000.

For FY11, County participation is anticipated for the following projects:

CHI Centers: \$200,000 (G.O. Bond)

Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital: \$100,000 (Current Revenue)

Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, Inc.: \$50,000 (Current Revenue)

Ivymount School, Inc.: \$100,000 (G.O. Bond)

Olney Theatre: \$500,000 (Arts Facility Financing - G.O. Bond), and

Old Blair Auditorium: \$600,000 (Arts Facility Financing - G.O. Bond). To provide matching funds to assist with rehabilitation/maintenance to prevent further deterioration in the former Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium.

The Old Blair Auditorium Project (a private, non-profit organization) received State bond bill funding of \$600,000 for the renovation of the Old Blair High School Auditorium. In FY06-07 the County provided \$190,000 as a partial match for the State funds with \$50,000 in current revenue for DPWT to develop a Program of Requirements and cost estimate for the project, and bond funded expenditure of \$140,000 to pay for part of the construction. The Council will consider appropriating the \$140,000 after: a) facility planning is complete and the full cost of the renovation is known; b) the County, MCPS, and the Old Blair Auditorium Project resolve issues about management of the renovation project, operation of the facility, and parking for the facility; and c) the Old Blair High School Auditorium project raises the remaining \$410,000 required to match the State funding. MCPS has included funds for a feasibility study for the auditorium in its Facility Planning project (No. 966553). During the study, MCPS will work with the community to develop a new program of requirements for the auditorium.

OTHER DISCLOSURES

- A pedestrian impact analysis will be performed during design or is in progress.

- The Executive asserts that this project conforms to the requirements of relevant local plans, as required by the Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act.

Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School Design Feasibility Study

*Prepared for
Montgomery County Public Schools*

*by
Grimm and Parker, Architects*

September, 2009



Introduction

This design feasibility study was conducted for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) under the direction of staff of the Department of Facilities Management:

Montgomery County Board of Education

Ms. Shirley Brandman	President
Mrs. Patricia O'Neill	Vice President
Ms. Laura Berthiaume	Member
Mr. Christopher S. Barclay	Member
Ms. Judy Docca	Member
Mr. Michael A. Durso	Member
Mr. Phil Kauffman	Member
Mr. Tim Hwang	Student Member

MCPS Administration:

Dr. Jerry Weast	Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Joseph J. Lavorgna	Acting Director, Department of Facilities Management
Mr. James C. Song	Director, Division of Construction
Mr. Michael Shpur	Architect School Facilities
Mr. Seth Adams	Project Manager, Division of Construction
Mr. Craig F. Benjamin	Assistant Project Manager, Division of Construction
Mrs. Robin Adler	Planner, Division of Construction

Portable self-powered monitor speakers for the stage, additional speaker coverage for dressing rooms, quantities of microphones and wireless microphones and other system features, including interface with lighting cues, are features that will contribute to the cost and complexity of the system, which can vary widely.

Proposed layouts for each option, including advantages, disadvantages, and cost comparisons are provided below. Schematic building sections have been provided for reference.

Feasibility Committee:

Mr. Seth Adams	MCPS Division of Construction
Ms. Robin Adler	MCPS Division of Construction
Mr. Craig Benjamin	MCPS Division of Construction
Mr. Jonathan Bernstein	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Ms. Wendy Brown	Community
Mr. Jeff Bourne	Montgomery County Recreation Department
Mr. Alan Bowser, Esq.	Park Hills Civic Assoc.
Ms. Ann Collins	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Mr. Rob DeBernardis	Montgomery County Office of the County Executive
Mr. Jonathan Elkind	Community
Ms. Lisa Gabriel	Silver Spring International Middle School PTSA
Ms. Kate Garvey	DHHS-Mont. Co.
Ms. Norma Hendrickson	Community
Mr. Marc Hoffman	Community
Mr. Raymond Jenkins	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Mr. William Kaarid	MCRD
Ms. Anne Kaiser	Park Hills Civic Assoc.
Mr. Sanford Kemper	Community
Ms. Amy Kincaid	Change Matters
Mr. Greg Lewis	Washington Revels
Mr. Joseph Mamana	Silver Spring International Middle School
Mr. Joe McHugh	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Mr. Stuart Moore	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Ms. Crystal Myers	MNCPPC
Ms. Juanita Newell	Self, Curtaincall Productions
Mr. Dave Ottalin	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Ms. Vicky Parcan	Silver Spring International Middle School Principal
Mr. Mark Posner	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.
Ms. Lisa Reilly	Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc.

Grimm + Parker Architects

Mr. Chris Richardson	Park Hills Civic Assoc.
Mr. James Riley	Neighborhood
Ms. Margaret Rittman	Silver Spring International Middle School PTSA
Ms. Roylene Roberts	Montgomery County SSRL
Ms. Tina Slater	Park Hills Civic Assoc.
Mr. Benjamin Stutz	Councilmember Ervin, Montgomery County Council
Ms. Diantha Swift	Principal, Sligo Creek ES
Mr. Dale Tibbitts	Councilmember Elrich, Montgomery County Council
Mr. Jason Tomassini	The Gazette
Mr. Mel Tull	Silver Spring Regional Center
Mr. Terrell Zimmerman	Silver Spring International Middle School

The committee was asked to assess the feasibility of various renovation schemes to the existing auditorium in the Old Blair High School building which now houses both Silver Spring International Middle School and Sligo Creek Elementary School, located in Silver Spring. The programmatic goals for the facility is to create a performing arts center with a capacity of between 650 and 900 people, including two to four separate multipurpose classrooms for community and school use.

Grimm and Parker would like to thank all of the Feasibility Committee members for their time and commitment to this task. Their enthusiastic attitude, creative ideas, and thorough analysis have helped make this study meaningful for the school system and the community at large.

Executive Summary

The feasibility design committee explored various options for renovating the existing Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium. The existing space is currently not in use, and has been separated from Silver Spring International Middle School and Sligo Creek Elementary School by semi-permanent partitions.

The existing auditorium consists of approximately 15,000 square feet, including periphery storage and office spaces. The existing condition of the space is not compliant with local building codes, including Life Safety and Maryland Accessibility Code requirements. The existing finishes will require replacement.

Four alternatives were developed with the committee for revitalization of the space. A detailed analysis for each alternative is provided in this study.

Option 1 incorporates the minimum amount of work required to make the space useable by code requirements. This scheme utilizes the existing stage and concrete risers from the 1st floor level down, provides a handicap lift to the stage, and creates a stage level, ADA accessible dressing room. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are removed, and the areas below are filled to allow for the creation of two, 1000 sq.ft. classroom spaces and restroom facilities for the auditorium. This option provides approximately 840 seats. The cost for this option is estimated at \$4,860,772.

Option 2 incorporates side balcony areas to break down the scale of the auditorium. This scheme maintains the existing stage and portions of the existing concrete risers from the 1st floor level down, provides a handicap lift to the stage, and creates a stage level, ADA accessible dressing room. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are removed, and the areas below are filled to allow for the creation of two, 1000 sq.ft. classroom spaces and restroom facilities for the auditorium. This scheme provides approximately 750 seats. The cost for this option is estimated at \$4,946,992.

Option 3 includes all the work included in Option 2, and incorporates the addition of second floor structure to allow for the creation of two, large multipurpose spaces. This scheme includes an entry vestibule for the auditorium and an elevator. Second floor corridor and mechanical space is also included in this scheme. This scheme provides approximately 750 seats. The cost for this option is estimated at \$5,602,800.

Option 4 reduces the width of the auditorium and incorporates a second floor balcony to help break down the scale of the auditorium. This scheme utilizes the existing stage and concrete risers from the 1st floor level down in the remaining auditorium. A ramp system is introduced to provide access to the stage, and a handicap lift to the orchestra pit. An elevator is included to provide ADA access to the second floor for both the auditorium and the middle school. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are removed, and the areas are left 2' low (existing floor level of the rooms below the risers). A lobby and back of the auditorium circulation area is provided. Two 900 sf classroom spaces and restroom facilities for the auditorium are provided at this level. The entrance to the auditorium is provided at grade (-2' from existing floor). The second floor is developed to provide access to the back stage stair, and includes additional dressing rooms and mechanical space. This scheme provides approximately 600 seats at the 1st floor level and 200 seats on the balcony. The cost for this option is estimated at \$6,275,000.

After careful evaluation of these options, the committee concluded that Options 3 and 4 had similar merit and were preferred to the other alternatives. Although the primary use of the auditorium would be for the community, both schemes reduce the size of the existing auditorium to be more appropriate for the school ages represented by the middle and elementary schools.

Options

This section provides a review of the four basic options the Feasibility Committee explored for the auditorium renovation.

The shape and contour of the site do not allow for any realistic revisions to increase parking or improve traffic flow. It was determined by the committee that site issues would need to be addressed through scheduling of the facility use, public transportation (i.e. shuttle buses) and alternate transportation methods, as schools are exempt from meeting the special parking requirements. The 200 on site parking spaces will remain for afterhours use.

The mechanical systems, including ductwork, air handling units, and controls, are beyond their useful lives and appear to be in fair to poor condition. Two of the three units were not operating at the time of our survey. The space has not been utilized, which may have led to further deterioration of the units. The air handling units and associated controls need to be replaced in their entirety. It is recommended that the ductwork be replaced in its entirety, however, as a minimum, they should be internally cleaned.

Currently, supply air is provided above the ceiling and is drawn into the occupied space through light openings in the ceiling by low return air grilles. This distribution system is strongly discouraged. If the existing duct system is cleaned and reused, this same air flow pattern is preserved. If possible, some supply air should be injected into the occupied space via ceiling type diffusers so as to enhance the air distribution system.

For Option 1, the minimum approach is to replace the air handling units in kind, upgrade the controls to direct digital type, and clean the ductwork. A pre-cool/pre-heat coil is recommended to enhance dehumidification and coil freeze protection for the two (2) multizone units. Units may need to be shipped in modules and assembled in place based on the physical restrictions of the building and current unit locations.

For other options, mechanical systems can be upgraded to enhance energy-efficiency and unit performance; the mechanical systems can be provided with independent cooling, they can utilize heat recovery and can be provided with energy-conserving control sequences and reduction of HVAC-related noise. The following is a description of enhancements which are recommended to be implemented to meet current standards:

Zoning/AHU's: In lieu of providing multi-zone units to serve multiple spaces, it is recommended to provide individual single zone air handling units to serve each of the existing zones. These air handling unit systems should be provided with a supplemental independent cooling system (i.e.; direct expansion air-cooled condensing units) such that the building's central chilled water plant does not have to be operational for events during non-educational periods (nights, weekends, summer). The unit could still utilize a dual temperature coil for cooling during educational periods and for heating, however, this would not be preferred.

Heat Recovery: Based on the high quantity of outside air required to meet Ventilation Code requirements, which are based on occupancy, a total energy heat recovery device (i.e., heat wheel) is recommended to re-use waste heat to pre-cool and pre-dehumidify the outside airstream during the cooling mode and preheat and humidify the outside air stream during the heating mode. The use of this device to capture energy enhances indoor air quality, while reducing heating and cooling loads, which results in lower energy consumption. In addition, the use of a sensible heat recovery device (plate heat exchanger or heat pipe) to be used in conjunction with the heat recovery wheel enhances indoor air quality while further reducing energy usage. A sensible heat recovery device provides free reheat for dehumidification, using waste heat while enhancing the efficiency of the unit.

System Design: Through building load modeling, each space can be modeled on an hourly basis throughout the year to determine the part-load condition at which the unit will typically operate. Internal heat gains, such as people and lights, are the main contributors to heat gain and the associated cooling requirements. The use of variable speed drives allows the unit to operate at variable air flow conditions to closely track part-load conditions.

The design enhances dehumidification, while reducing the requirement for reheating, saving fan energy, and simultaneously reducing HVAC-related sound.

Control Strategies: Through the direct digital control system, energy-conserving control sequences can be implemented to reduce energy consumption, while enhancing indoor air quality. Control sequences include enthalpy economizer cycles, demand-controlled ventilation, night purge, and relative humidity/dehumidification strategies designed specifically for the use of the space.

System Acoustics: The use of duct sound attenuators, 4-inch thick air handling unit casings, and low velocity, sound-lined ductwork and low noise air terminal devices will reduce HVAC-related sounds. If rooftop units are implemented, sound-absorbing concrete located within the curb space and heavy gauge supply and return air ductwork will be implemented to minimize HVAC-related sound. System acoustics will be designed to achieve a minimum NC level of 25.

The electrical systems in the auditorium and support spaces are beyond their useful lives and appear to be in fair to poor condition. New spaces, including the classrooms and restrooms, will require new lighting, receptacles, and fire alarm devices to suit the proposed configurations. Telecommunications services will be provided, integrated into the existing building systems, as required by Maryland State Department of Education Technology Education Facility Guidelines.

Electrical Distribution: All Federal Pacific electrical distribution equipment is recommended to be replaced on a one-to-one basis as a minimum. New panels will be sized and configured to suit any of the proposed schemes, including HVAC modifications, lift and elevator.

Fire Alarm: Fire alarm system initiation and notification devices, integrated into the building system, will be required in accordance with NFPA 72 and 101 requirements, as well as ADA guidelines in all proposed schemes. Supervised tamper and flow switches will be required for the sprinkler system.

Lighting: The existing lighting is recommended to be replaced. Energy efficient fluorescent lighting with electronic ballasts is recommended for stage work lights and in utility spaces. The existing house lights do not appear in good condition.

Lighting controls for theatrical and house lighting are recommended to be replaced as they are obsolete and well past their expected useful life. As a minimum, an economical commercial lighting control system is recommended for the house lighting with a distributed theatrical dimming system with new fixtures, connector strips and DMX-512 controls for the stage lighting. As an alternative, the house lighting would be incorporated with the stage lighting in a single centralized theatrical dimming system. A wide range of console choices are available from many manufacturers, including software based stage lighting controllers that operate on a laptop or desktop computer.

Manual rigging is the minimum recommendation for the stage equipment, with motorized rigging as an alternative.

Sound System: A new audio/video system is recommended for the Auditorium. As a minimum, a primary mixing console and Digital Signal Processor that can configure the system for different functions and presets is recommended, to be located in the control booth. Microphones connections as well as wireless microphone inputs would be incorporated into the system. A left/right/center speaker configuration is recommended to provide coverage for the seating area. Orchestra pit speakers and an RF assistive listening system for the audience would also be included with the system configuration. Additional speakers for under balcony and balcony seating would be required in Scheme 4.

Project on/off and screen up/down controls will be included with the video system controls, as well as video routing control to allow users to select computer or video from various interface locations. Playback devices such as DVD and Blu-ray located at the mixing position would be available with basic transport controls.

Option 1

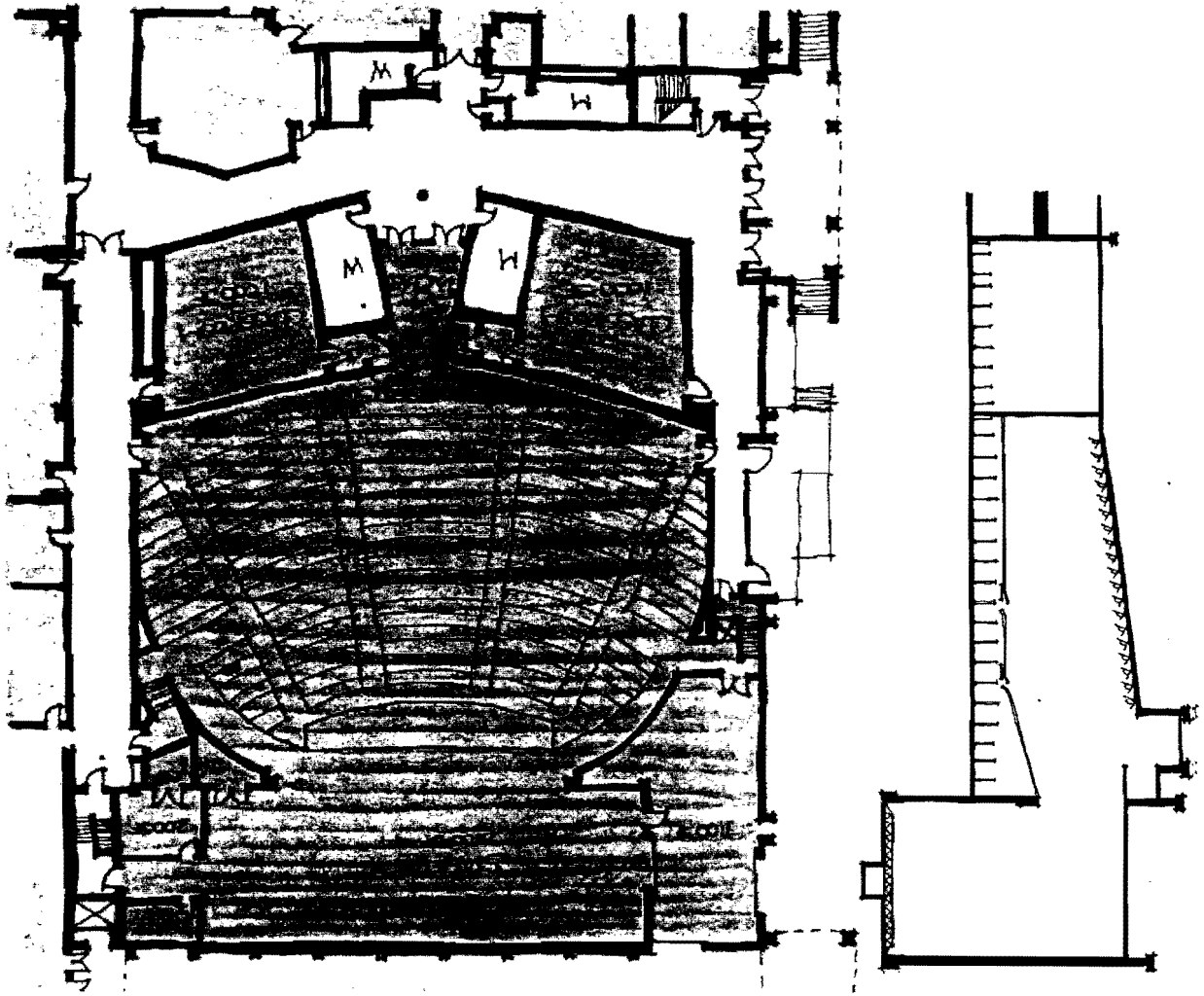
This option meets the program objectives incorporating the minimum amount of work required to make the space useable by code requirements. This scheme utilizes the existing stage and concrete risers from the main entrance level down. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are demolished to create classroom space. The following is provided in this scheme:

- Handicapped access to the stage by a lift near the theater entrance.
- A stage level, ADA accessible dressing room.
- Two large multi-purpose classroom spaces
- New restroom facilities for the auditorium at the existing lobby.
- Approximately 840 seats.



Option 1

OPTION 1	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Minimum cost impact.	Scale of space remains large for school use.
Minimum impact to the school during construction.	Separated "green rooms" and dressing rooms.
Multipurpose Classrooms have high ceilings for greater flexibility.	No handicap access to the orchestra pit.
Lobby addition could be added to this scheme as an alternate.	No separate lobby space is provided.
	Less additional classroom space is added compared to other schemes.



Grimm + Parker Architects

Summary Table and Cost Comparison

OPTION 1		
Description of Work		Total
Auditorium Renovation		
	Demolition	\$ 822,720
	Renovation Work Total	\$ 4,038,052
	New Construction	
Alternates		
	Entrance Lobby Addition	\$ 160,062
	Mechanical System Upgrades	\$ 300,000
	Theater Package Upgrades	\$ 400,000
	Subtotal	\$ 860,062
TOTAL OPTION 1 COST		\$ 5,720,834

Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School

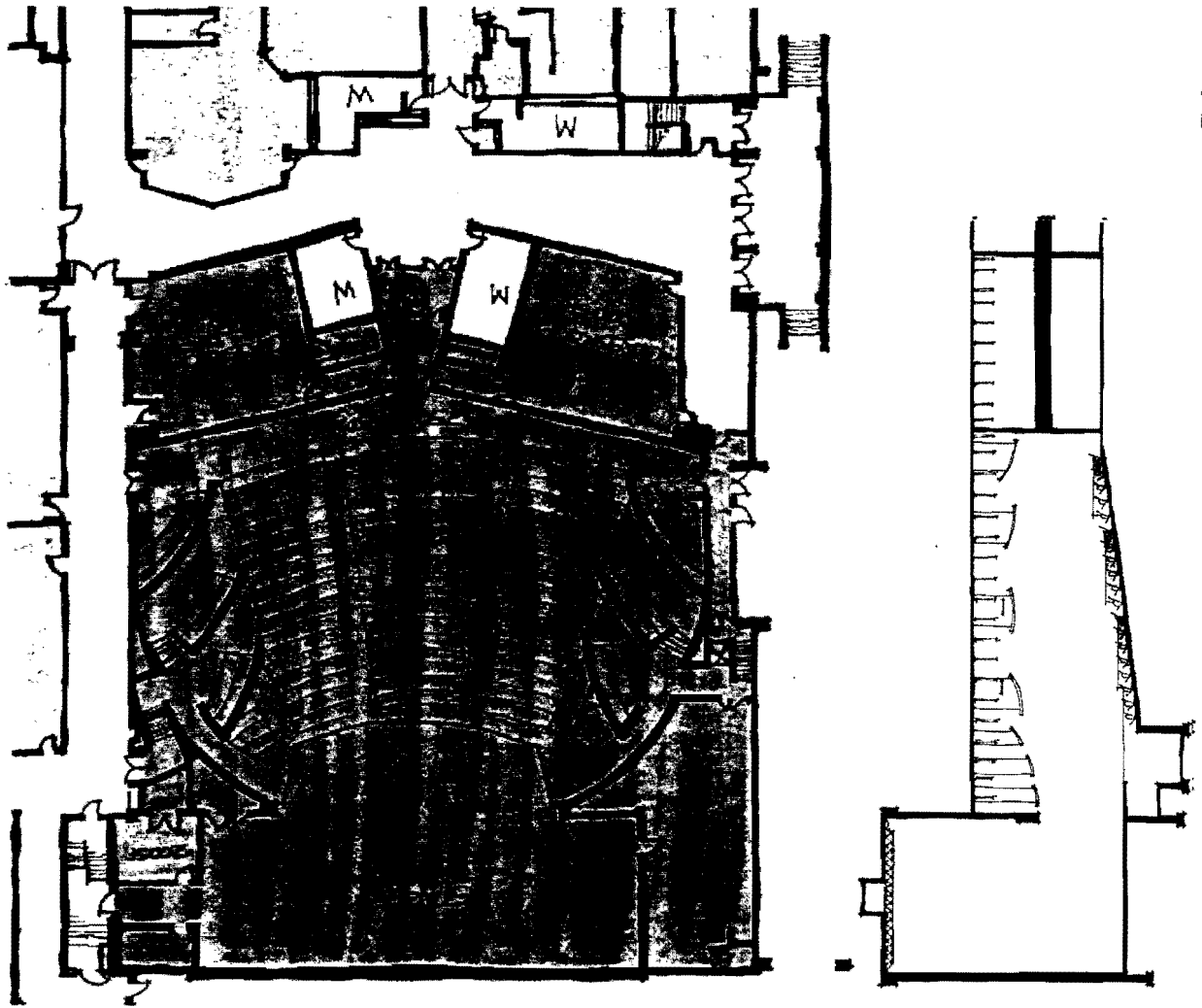
Option 2

This option meets the program objectives by incorporating parterres (side balcony areas) to break down the scale of the auditorium. This scheme maintains the existing stage and portions of the existing concrete risers from the entrance level down. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are demolished to create classroom space. The following is provided in this scheme:

- Handicapped access to the stage by a lift near the theater entrance.
- A stage level, ADA accessible dressing room.
- Two large multi-purpose classroom spaces.
- New restroom facilities for the auditorium at the existing lobby.
- A series of parterres to break down the scale of the auditorium. Additional ADA compliant seating is provided by these areas.
- This scheme provides approximately 750 seats.

Option 2

OPTION 2	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Scale of space will appear more appealing to school age users.	Less seating available.
Aesthetically pleasing space.	Separated "green rooms" and dressing rooms.
Parterres may improve acoustics.	No handicap access to the orchestra pit.
Multipurpose Classrooms have high ceilings for greater flexibility.	Auditorium capacity is less than middle school population.
Lobby addition could be added to this scheme as an alternate.	No separate lobby space is provided.
	Less additional classroom space is added compared to other schemes.



Grimm + Parker Architects

OPTION 2		
Description of Work		Total
Auditorium Renovation		
	Demolition	\$ 839,012
	Renovation Work	\$ 4,107,980
	New Construction	
Alternates		
	Entrance Lobby Addition	\$ 160,062
	Mechanical System Upgrades	\$ 300,000
	Theater Package Upgrades	\$ 400,000
	Subtotal	\$ 860,062
TOTAL OPTION 2 COST		\$ 5,807,054

Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School

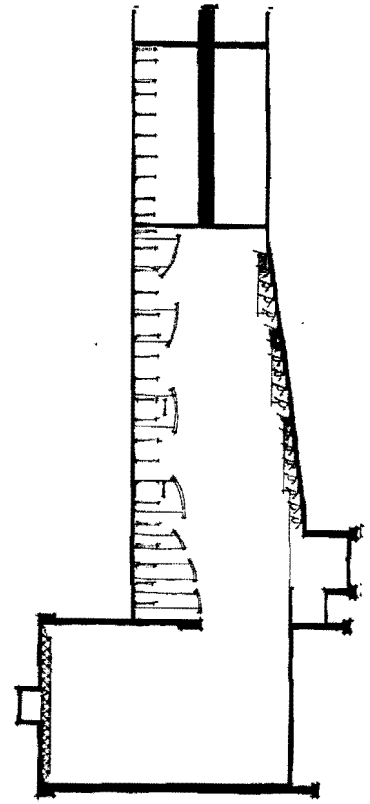
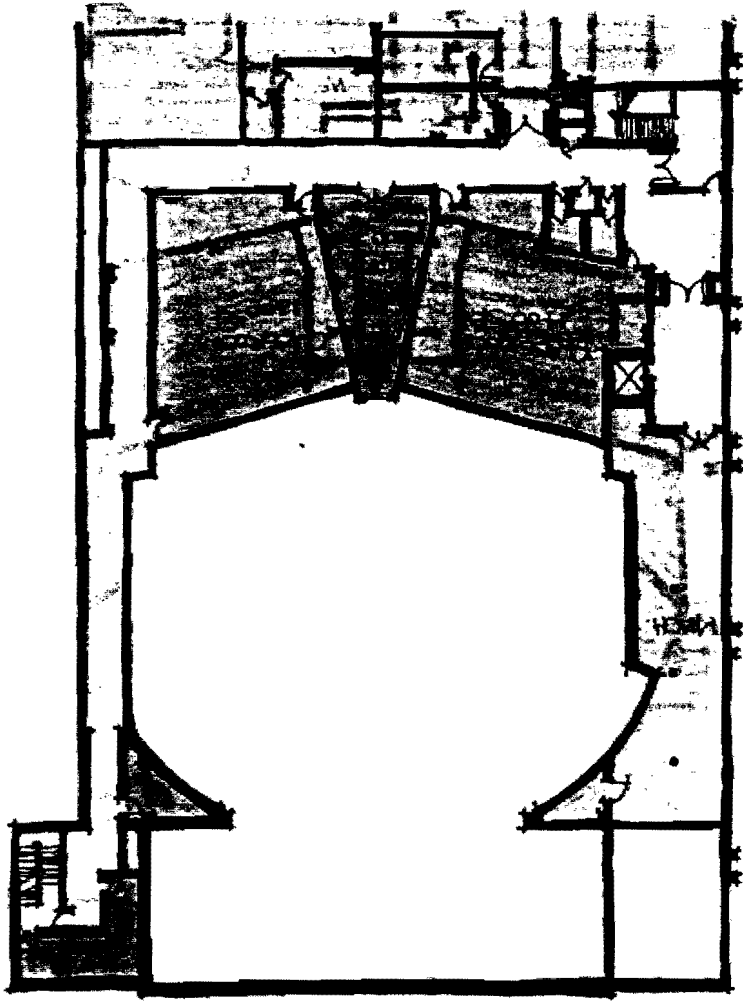
Option 3

This option meets the program objectives by incorporating parterres (side balcony areas) to break down the scale of the auditorium as shown in Option 2. This scheme maintains the existing stage and portions of the existing concrete risers from the entrance level down. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are demolished to create first and second floor classroom space. The following is provided in this scheme:

- Handicapped access to the stage by a lift near the theater entrance.
- A stage level, ADA accessible dressing room.
- Two large multi-purpose classroom spaces at first floor. Two large multi-purpose classrooms at second floor.
- New restroom facilities for the auditorium at the existing lobby.
- A series of parterres to break down the scale of the auditorium. Additional ADA compliant seating is provided by these areas.
- A new elevator for auditorium and school use.
- A new theater entrance and lobby space.
- This scheme provides approximately 750 seats.

Option 3

OPTION 3	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Scale of space will appear more appealing to school age users.	Less seating available.
Aesthetically pleasing space.	Separated "green rooms" and dressing rooms.
Parterres may improve acoustics.	No handicap access to the orchestra pit.
Provides ADA accessible elevator for the auditorium and the school.	Classrooms/Multipurpose rooms have minimal ceiling height available: 1st floor – 10 feet; 2nd floor – 8 feet.
Additional multipurpose spaces on the second floor.	
Additional rooms could be used as "green rooms".	
Visual access to auditorium could be provided at second floor classrooms.	



Grimm + Parker Architects

OPTION 3		
Description of Work		Total
Auditorium Renovation		
	Demolition	\$ 843,810
	Renovation Work	\$ 4,604,777
	New Construction	\$ 154,205
Alternates		
	Mechanical System Upgrades	\$ 300,000
	Theater Package Upgrades	\$ 450,000
	Subtotal	\$ 750,000
TOTAL OPTION 3 COST		\$ 6,352,792

Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School

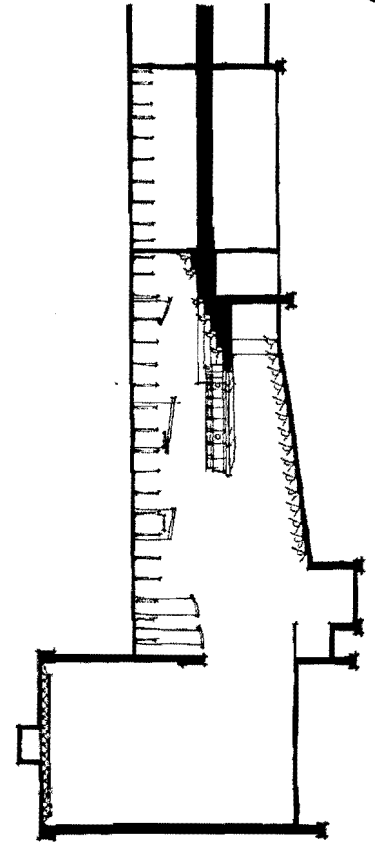
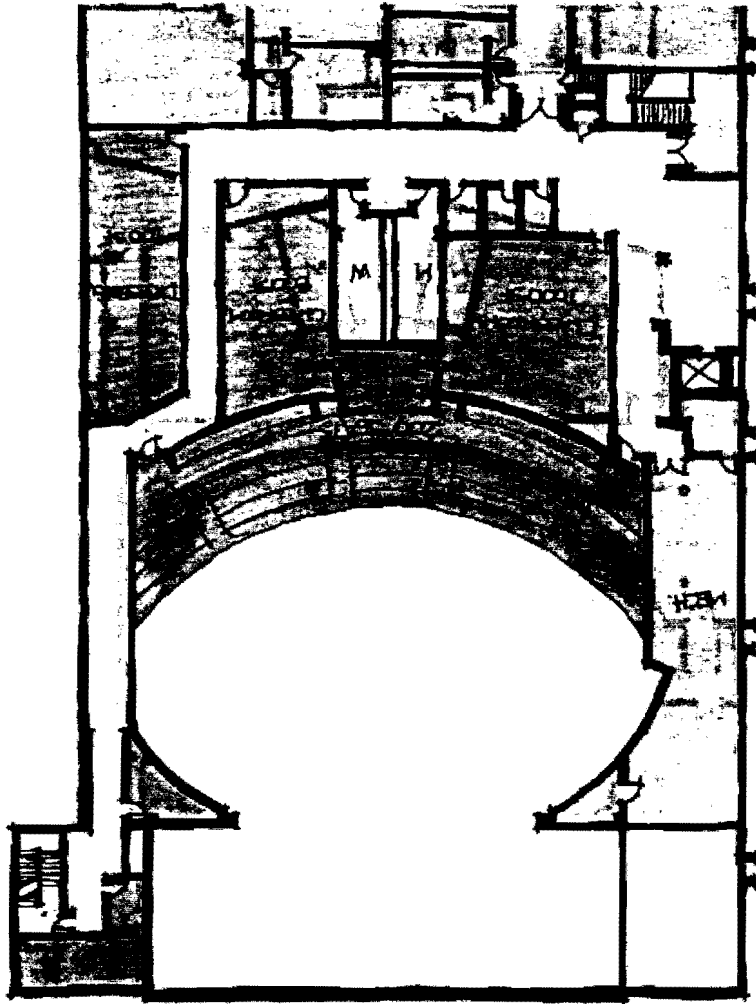
Option 4

This option meets the program objectives by reducing the width of the auditorium and incorporating a second floor balcony to help break down the scale of the auditorium. This scheme utilizes the existing stage and concrete risers from 2 feet below the entrance floor level down in the remaining auditorium. The existing seating risers at the back of the auditorium are demolished to create first and second floor classroom space. The following is provided in this scheme:

- A ramp system is introduced to provide access to the stage.
- Handicapped access lift to the orchestra pit.
- An elevator is included to provide ADA access to the second floor for both the auditorium and the middle school.
- A lobby and back of the auditorium circulation area.
- Two large multi-purpose classroom spaces at first floor. One large multi-purpose classroom at second floor.
- New restroom facilities for the auditorium at the new circulation area.
- An entrance to the auditorium at grade (-2' from existing floor).
- Second floor access to the back stage stair.
- Second floor dressing rooms and mechanical space.
- This scheme provides approximately 600 seats at the 1st floor level and 200 seats on the balcony.

Option 4

OPTION 1	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Scale of space will appear more appealing to school age users.	Most expensive option.
Provides full ADA access for both auditorium and school.	Balcony will require more supervision.
Creates separate auditorium lobby.	Classrooms/Multipurpose rooms have minimal ceiling height available: 1st floor – 12 feet; 2nd floor – 8 feet.
Additional multipurpose spaces on the second floor.	Most disruptive to school during construction.
1st floor classrooms will have 2 feet more ceiling height than Option 3.	Classrooms are smaller than Option 3.
	Smaller Control Room.



Grimm + Parker Architects

OPTION 4		
Description of Work		Total
Auditorium Renovation		
	Demolition	\$ 875,198
	Renovation Work	\$ 5,244,005
	New Construction	\$ 154,205
Alternates		
	Mechanical System Upgrades	\$ 300,000
	Theater Package Upgrades	\$ 450,000
	Subtotal	\$ 750,000
TOTAL OPTION 4 COST		\$ 7,023,408

Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation at Old Blair High School

Project Implementation Schedule

In evaluating the time required to fully execute the design and construction of the Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium, the A/E evaluation team has developed the following schedule of activities and time durations.

	Year 1												Year 2												Year 3												Year 4											
	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D			
Feasibility Study																																																
Architect Selection																																																
Schematic Design																																																
Committee Meetings																																																
Preliminary Plans																																																
BOE/County Approval																																																
Design Development																																																
Construction Documents																																																
Advertise for Bids																																																
Bid Opening / Contract Award																																																
Construction																																																
Occupancy																																																

Conclusions and Recommendations



In reviewing the various options, the Feasibility Study team concluded that all four options met the programmatic goals of the committee and program. The committee agreed that Option 3 was the best solution for the renovation of the Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium. The committee also agreed that Option 4 had similar merits to Option 3 and should also be considered as a recommended option.

After careful evaluation, it is clear that Options 3 and 4 most fully satisfies the educational and program goals of the auditorium renovation project. These options offer the most flexibility for the space, while providing for the needs of the schools. Therefore, it is committee's recommendation that the County pursue one of these options if the auditorium facility is to be renovated.

Project: Elizabeth Stickley Auditorium Renovation

Scope: Explore various options to create a performing arts center with a capacity of between 650-900 people, including two to four separate multi-purpose classrooms for community and school use.

Square Footage:

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
Total Gross	18,795	18,795	18,795	18,795

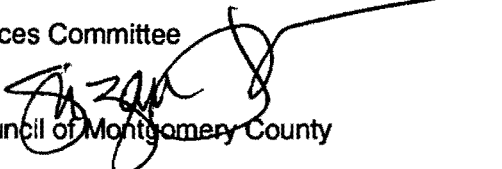
Construction Cost	\$5,720,834	\$5,807,054	\$6,352,792	\$7,023,408
Planning Costs	\$ 569,875	\$ 577,635	\$ 626,751	\$ 687,107
Contingency & Other Related Cost	\$ 509,063	\$ 515,529	\$ 556,459	\$ 606,756
Furniture and Equipments	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Total Project Cost Estimates	\$ 6,899,772	\$ 7,000,218	\$ 7,636,003	\$ 8,417,270



MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2010

TO: George Leventhal, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Suzan Jenkins, CEO 
Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

SUBJECT: Assessment of Needs for Performing Arts Spaces Since "Creative Montgomery"—the 2001 Cultural Plan

INTRODUCTION

In response to a recent inquiry about the Blair Auditorium, AHCMC has revisited the County's Cultural Plan, *Creative Montgomery* (The Plan), which was completed in May 2001. The 2001 Cultural Plan examined cultural facilities that were both available and "in progress" at that time. The Plan noted that new facilities that were being planned and built in 2001 *"will provide additional space for performances, but they will not substantially increase the performance venues for those groups who rely on rental space."*

The Plan observed that

- *"There is a demonstrated lack of available high quality theatrical performance rental space. Rental space is needed to serve the many emerging and mid-sized cultural organizations and larger local groups that do not have dedicated rehearsal and performance venues, as well as for small national touring acts."*
- *Many groups have attempted to use high school auditoria for their programs. However the results have been generally reported as disappointing. Performing arts groups report issues of availability, the schools' inappropriate size and technical accommodation of their audience and productions, as well as the difficulties of negotiating use during times that compete with school activities. Schools are reportedly used as a last resort if other space is not available. While the Silver Spring Intermediate School project could address some this need, that facility possesses many limitations."*

The Plan concluded that *"[G]iven the un-addressed needs of existing and new groups in the community who rely on rental space, two additional 450-seat multi-user theaters are needed. Potential locations for these include eastern Montgomery County and Gaithersburg."*

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The 2001 Cultural Plan also noted the extensive growth of nonprofit arts and humanities groups in the County finding that:

"During research completed as part of the planning process, it became evident that there are more than 250 nonprofit organizations contributing to the county's cultural life. Research also found that half of the organizations were founded since 1984. Not surprisingly, the larger organizations tended to be the older organizations."

The Plan also described the growing ethnic diversity of the county and the contributions of these residents to the county's cultural life.

"Within the current life of Montgomery County, there are a growing number of different ethnic communities that present their particular artistic expression and aesthetic. By all accounts, this growth in the immigrant and culturally specific populations will continue to make a significant impact on cultural offerings in the area."

Another aspect of the cultural environment is the reluctance of patrons who live in one region of the county to travel to another region for their cultural experiences. The Plan noted:

"Transportation is a very significant issue in the county. . . . During the planning process, county residents who live beyond the communities that immediately abut DC expressed an unwillingness to travel to DC in the evenings to attend cultural events. Although residents of Bethesda and Silver Spring may find it equally convenient to attend events in DC or in Montgomery County, residents of outlying areas, where population is rapidly growing, are looking for events closer to home."

UPDATE

In the almost nine years since the Cultural Plan was completed, the county has seen:

- an enormous growth in cultural facilities
- a significant increase in the up-county population
- a significant increase in the diversity of its population in general and its cultural organizations in particular.

Facilities Update

Since 2001, several facilities have opened that have some capacity for rental usage. These include:

1. Olney Theatre; Olney completed its remodeling and added a new main stage. The historic main stage and their Gudelsky Theatre lab space are available for rental and are being used by community performing groups, including Bel Cantanti Opera and Act Two Performing Arts, two new organizations that did not exist at the time the Plan was undertaken.
2. Round House Theatre; after moving into its new space in Bethesda and Silver Spring, RHT is offering the black box theatre in Silver Spring for rentals when it is not being used for RHT's own productions.
3. The BlackRock Center for the Arts; located in Germantown, BlackRock has a small black box space suitable for dance that seats about 120, and a fully-equipped theatre that seats about 240. These are available for rental when not being used for BlackRock's own programs.

4. The Performing Arts Center at Montgomery College, Silver Spring; recently opened, the center includes both a black box theatre and a fully-equipped 500-seat theatre. The latter is now available for rentals.
5. The Arts Barn at the Kentlands; operated by the City of Gaithersburg, the Arts Barn includes a 99-seat theatre available to local groups for performances.

Cultural Environment Update

AHCMC's grants staff estimates that there are now approximately 400 nonprofit arts and humanities groups in Montgomery County, compared to the 250 noted in the Plan in 2001. Much of this extraordinary growth is attributable to culturally-specific organizations that reflect the continued growth in the county's cultural diversity. For example, grant applications have been received recently from the Cambodian Buddhist Cultural Group, Nrityanjali Inc. and Kuchipudi Kalanidhi, two Indian dance troupes. These and other groups that reflect a culturally-specific art form are recent entries on the cultural scene in the county.

The largest growth spurt is occurring in small and mid-size organizations, defined as those under \$150,000 in annual expenses. This is the type of organization that typically does not have a venue of its own and that relies on rental space for rehearsals and performances.

CONCLUSION

- There continues to be a need for a multi-user 450-seat theater available for rental in eastern Montgomery County and in the Gaithersburg or upper Montgomery County areas.
- The Plan did not find a need for a larger performance space. It noted that the proposal for renovation of the auditorium at the Silver Spring Intermediate School possesses many limitations. Among those difficulties is the challenge of scheduling rehearsals and performances in a space shared with a school and the high cost of renting a large auditorium that most likely will not be filled.
- The Old Blair Auditorium project may benefit the adjoining schools and the surrounding community, but should not be considered to be an arts facility.

For more information about this Needs Assessment, feel free to contact Fran Abrams, Grants Director of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County at 301-565-3805 x22 or Suzan Jenkins, CEO of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County at 301-565-3805 x23.

**NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, THE
PROCEEDS OF THE LOAN MUST BE ENCUMBERED BY THE
BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS OR EXPENDED FOR THE
PURPOSES PROVIDED IN THIS ACT NO LATER THAN JUNE
1, 2012 (Montgomery County) 200,000**

**Chapter 445 of the Acts of 2005, as amended by Chapter 65 of the Acts of 2007,
Chapter 219 of the Acts of 2008, and Chapter 707 of the Acts of 2009**

**SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
MARYLAND, That:**

(3) ZA01 LOCAL HOUSE OF DELEGATES INITIATIVES

**(AR) Old Blair High School Auditorium. Provide a grant equal to
the lesser of (i) \$300,000 or (ii) the amount of the matching
fund provided, to the Board of Directors of the Old Blair
Auditorium Project, Inc. for the repair, renovation,
construction, reconstruction, and capital equipping of the Old
Blair High School Auditorium located in Silver Spring.
Notwithstanding Section 1(5) of this Act, the matching fund
may consist of in kind contributions or funds expended prior
to the effective date of this Act and the grantee must present
evidence that a matching fund will be provided by June 1,
[2011] 2012 (Montgomery County) 300,000**

ZA02 LOCAL SENATE INITIATIVES

**(AV) Old Blair High School Auditorium. Provide a grant equal to
the lesser of (i) \$300,000 or (ii) the amount of the matching
fund provided, to the Board of Directors of the Old Blair
Auditorium Project, Inc. for the repair, renovation,
construction, reconstruction, and capital equipping of the Old
Blair High School Auditorium located in Silver Spring.
Notwithstanding Section 1(5) of this Act, the matching fund
may consist of in kind contributions or funds expended prior
to the effective date of this Act and the grantee must present
evidence that a matching fund will be provided by June 1,
[2011] 2012 (Montgomery County) 300,000**

Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2006

**SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
MARYLAND, That:**

(3) ZA02 LOCAL HOUSE OF DELEGATES INITIATIVES

Department of Legislative Services
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 718
Appropriations

(Delegates Hixson and Mizeur)

Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan of 2005 - Montgomery County - Old Blair High School Auditorium

This bill extends the deadline to June 1, 2012, for the Board of Directors of the Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc., as grantee, to provide evidence that a matching fund will be provided for the Old Blair High School Auditorium as required in the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan of 2005.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2010.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect the finances or operations of Montgomery County.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 445 of 2005 authorized up to \$600,000 for the repair, renovation, construction, reconstruction, and capital equipping of the Old Blair High School Auditorium in Silver Spring. The required matching funds may consist of in-kind contributions or funds expended prior to June 1, 2005. Under Chapter 445, the grantee had until June 1, 2007, to present evidence that the required matching funds would be provided; however, Chapter 45 of 2007 extended the deadline to present evidence that a matching fund would be provided to June 1, 2009. Chapter 219 of 2008 repealed a requirement for the grantee to convey an historic easement to the Maryland Historical

Trust. Chapter 707 of 2009 extended the deadline to present evidence of a matching fund to June 1, 2011.

Chapter 153 of 2003 established a seven-year limitation on the authority to spend an appropriation for a capital expenditure and a seven-year limitation on the authorization for State debt. The Act applies to all debt authorized on or after June 1, 1997. Under the Internal Revenue Code, an entity that sells tax-exempt bonds must spend down the proceeds within 18 to 24 months, depending on the project. The law prohibits entities that sell tax-exempt bonds from earning arbitrage, by which an entity earns a higher rate of interest from the investment of bond proceeds than the interest paid on the bonds. The accumulation of unexpended bond proceeds for projects over seven years old has resulted in the State earning arbitrage interest on the bond proceeds, creating a federal tax rebate liability.

Background: The Old Blair Auditorium – a 1,000 seat facility built in 1969 – has been closed since June 1998. The building was renovated for use as a combined middle and elementary school, but the auditorium was not included in the renovation. The grantee advises that the auditorium requires a variety of upgrades, including new seats, accessibility improvements, and a new heating and air conditioning system.

The grantee originally planned to raise money from private sources; however, due to fundraising difficulties, the grantee is now planning to rely on a grant from Montgomery County to meet the State matching fund requirement. Due to unfavorable economic conditions, the county has not yet included grant funds in its capital budget. The matching fund deadline extension allows the project additional time to obtain county funds.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 18, 2010
mlm/ljm

Analysis by: Michael T. Vorgetts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

Memorandum

Date: April 16, 2010

To: Joint Education and Health and Human Services Committee

From: Valerie Ervin, Council Vice President *VE*

Re: Old Blair Auditorium Project Proposal

I would like to request that the joint Education and Health and Human Services Committee discuss programming funding for the Elizabeth Stickley (Old Blair) Auditorium in the FY11-16 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). **Specifically, I propose programming at least \$7.6 million in the FY11-16 CIP for the renovation of Old Blair Auditorium as a multi-use facility.**

Since my election in 2006, I have worked with residents and community leaders, including representatives from the Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc., on strategies to reopen the Old Blair Auditorium's doors as a multi-use facility that can accommodate musical and theatrical performances, after-school programs, and school and community events.

My advocacy in 2007, along with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) leadership, resulted in façade improvements at Silver Spring International Middle School. These improvements included fresh paint, new windows, screens for the utility equipment and new handrails.

Thanks to help from Senator Mikulski and Senator Sarbanes, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$200,000 towards the Old Blair Auditorium project budget under the Economic Development Initiative account in FY07. Unfortunately, Congress was unable to complete action on the overall appropriations bill and eliminated all earmarks in the continuing resolution. I am currently working with our congressional representatives in the hopes of securing another earmark for Old Blair.

In 2008, I secured funding for a feasibility study in the FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program in an effort to jumpstart the renovation. In the spring of 2009, MCPS, in collaboration with my office and the Executive Branch, conducted the study to explore options to renovate the auditorium, including identifying potential project designs and costs. The feasibility study was completed in September of 2009 and a joint Education and Health and Human Services Committee met to review the options. The Feasibility Committee's two preferred options for the potential multi-use facility ranged in total cost from \$7.6 million (Option 3) to \$8.4 million (Option 4).

In 2005, the County's District 20 State Delegation worked to get a \$600,000 bond bill passed in the Maryland General Assembly. I supported the extension of this bond bill in 2007, and again in 2009, so that the matching funds could be appropriated for the project. These extensions were necessary to fully examine options for the facility. I recently sent testimony to support the bond bill extension during the 2010 session of the General Assembly.

I asked County Executive Leggett to use the available \$600,000 State bond bill and include the renovation of Old Blair in the CIP. To my disappointment, no funds were specifically designated in the County Executive's Recommended FY11-16 CIP released on January 15, 2010. While the Executive recently sent over a funding recommendation for Old Blair in a budget adjustment memorandum on March 29 (Cost Sharing: MCG – No. 720601), it was only for the \$600,000 required State funding match, and was not transmitted as a separate CIP project.

I ask you to please support programming \$7.6 to \$8.4 million in funding for Old Blair Auditorium's renovation in the FY11-16 CIP as a separate CIP project. With construction costs low and the need for additional job creation, now is the time to move this important project forward. With this community waiting on a renovation for so many years, now is the time to demonstrate our commitment to the continued revitalization of Silver Spring and to unleash the potential of Old Blair Auditorium.

I look forward to working with you towards achieving this goal. I know that by working together we can achieve great things.