

## Measure CC Update And Overview - OPINION

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Thanks to the overwhelming support of Culver City voters, Culver City Unified School District is in the midst of perhaps the largest facilities improvement and renovation project in the District's history.

While it is expected to take 12 years to complete everything funded through the Measure CC bond issue, it is important for the District to share regular updates like this with the community.

When Culver City voters approved Measure CC, the school district implemented three parallel construction areas of focus:

- Our first area of focus addresses the expansion and completion of our preexisting large-scope projects, made possible by the passage of Measure CC; particularly additional improvements

to our Athletic Complex at Culver City High School and renovations to Robert Frost Auditorium in three specific areas: Replacing the ancient heating unit with a state-of-the-art heating and air conditioning system, making the "back of house" amenities accessible to each and every one of our students, and providing a safe and fully-functional catwalk and lighting structure for our stage area.

- Our second major area of focus involves performing the deferred maintenance projects that are best performed during summer, spring, and winter breaks when many students and staff are not present in the classrooms, and which can be implemented without having to wait for the often lengthy plan reviews and pre-approvals required by the Division of the State Architect "DSA" – a process that can take anywhere from 2 to 12 months after architectural plans are developed and submitted. Projects like the following have been identified as ideal summer projects because they do not require DSA review and approval and are best done when school is not in session:
  - o Renovation of the "Front" Gym at CCMS

- o Installation of Many Additional Security Cameras Throughout CCUSD
- o Additional Security Fencing at Several Schools

- o Immediate Roofing Needs
- o CCMS Weight Room

- Our third area of focus involves planning and implementing large-scale and long-range renovations at all of our school sites over the next 12 years so that those efforts properly align with the funding schedule since CCUSD will receive approximately one-fourth of the \$106 Million Measure CC bond proceeds every three years. These projects involve the largest investment of Measure CC funds, and include the formation of a large CCUSD construction team, including multiple architectural firms, several construction management firms, and associated inspection consultants, etc., which will operate within the structure of the previously-mentioned DSA pre-approval process.

All of these areas of focus are subject to the control of a statewide public facility construction governance structure that includes environmental regulations, public funding opportunities, safety

regulations, the DSA process, and an ever-changing legal environment that can either facilitate or restrict the progress of one or more of our three parallel areas of focus. There will be times throughout the process that we all wish things could move faster, but in order to adhere to the state requirements in place to assure for fair, safe and environmentally sensitive construction, projects may take longer than we anticipate. You can see the timeline for a typical project that requires DSA approval at [ccusdmeasurecc.org](http://ccusdmeasurecc.org). Please note that while CCUSD and its construction team controls much of this work, there are points along the way when even the District is subject to DSA's calendar. Of course, we are working diligently to schedule all of our projects so that they can be shovel-ready at the right time. As we continue our long-range planning, projects that can be done over spring break or over the summer are being planned as well, so that we take advantage of every opportunity to get work done on our campuses when students and teachers are not impacted.

In addition, a highly complex level of planning is required not only to meet state construction requirements but also to make the best use of our funds. For example, we are on the verge of completing the construction of a key component of our first area of focus, the expansion of our CCHS Athletic Complex through the investment of Measure CC funds.

This investment created an opportunity to apply for \$7.18 million in state matching funds from the next statewide facilities construction bond under the current funding guidelines. In other words, if the current effort to pass a "Kindergarten through community College Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2016" initiative is successful, the investment of Measure CC proceeds in our sports complex could make CCUSD eligible for a portion of those new bond funds, which could add more than \$7 million in new money to our current \$106 million Measure CC funding.

At the same time, a second component of our first area of focus, the complete set of detailed plans for the Robert Frost Auditorium modernization project, is currently languishing at the Division of the State Architect (DSA).

While we continue to work closely with DSA to move the process forward, we are currently waiting for the DSA reviewer to work through a huge stack of applications from other school districts across the state that were in the pipeline before ours.

Once it is our turn, the DSA reviewer will begin processing our plans for the Frost; however, DSA has informed us that the review is not expected to begin until the end of this year at the earliest. The architectural firm working on the Frost, Hodgetts and Fung, has made every possible attempt to expedite the approval process with DSA and will continue to work to get our plans reviewed as quickly as possible.

This is a very good example of good news-bad news: on one hand, the potential very good news is that new state funding for our facilities may be possible because of the investment we have made in our Athletic Complex; on the other hand, the delay in DSA's review of our plans for the Frost is very frustrating for our district and the entire community.

Another example of restrictions faced by the District comes from the constantly changing legal environment in our state construction process. Our second Area of focus, involving maintenance projects scheduled during school breaks when students and teachers are largely off campus, was set to begin the first day of summer break. However, an unexpected court decision related to the way school districts throughout the state contract for construction stopped our efforts cold and

created enormous delays in moving forward.

Again, good news-bad news. While the court decision stopped much of our construction, we are faring better than most districts in California because CCUSD's legal team was able to quickly add the new, legally required components to our contracts and negotiate additional assurances to protect the District. Though that process took several months and significantly delayed a long list of summer projects, our contracts now comply with the court's decision – something with which many other districts are still wrestling.

We are now working with our construction firm to clear up residual legal concerns about the manner in which the bid specifications for each project are prepared – another result of the court decision that was handed down in June.

We have employed an “all hands on deck” approach to resolving this final issue and to get our projects moving as quickly as possible. Since summer is now long gone, we are focusing our efforts on completing these projects in a manner that does not interfere with our ongoing educational programs.

Our third area of focus, the 12-year plan for complete renovations of our schools is underway with the interviews of our prospective architectural firms being conducted this week. We were gratified by both the quality and quantity of the architectural firms that responded to our request for proposals, and we had a very challenging task to reduce the number of firms wishing to work with us to the few that we will be interviewing. We expect several rounds of interviews to be completed and a team selected by October 10.

Immediately upon selection our architectural team will work with our Bond Program Management Firm, Harris and Associates, to provide our community with a complete schedule of major projects over the next 12 years. Within the next few months we should have a project scope that appropriately sequences the complex list of Measure CC projects to be completed over the next 12 years and prioritizes those projects based on both need and timing with other projects. This single, integrated long-range master plan will serve as a roadmap for the future, and we look forward to working with our construction team, our schools and our community to make sure Measure CC funds are spent in the most effective way possible to benefit the students we serve.

We believe it is critical to work cooperatively with the community to make sure everyone understands how our facilities improvements are progressing and any delays or problems we may encounter along the way.

That is why we will be scheduling regular public sessions before select Board of Education meetings to answer questions from the public about our progress. When scheduled, these meeting will begin at 5 p.m., and the superintendent, assistant superintendent, business services and members from our bond management/construction team will be available to address items related to Measure CC. In addition, please visit [ccusd-measurecc.org](http://ccusd-measurecc.org) where you can submit questions or concerns and read updates about our facilities improvements.

Of course all of our efforts moving forward – including Phase I projects – will include high levels of participation with site administration and staff to clarify goals, develop project specifications and identify when the work can be addressed without impacting teaching and learning.

We are excited about the future of our schools, and we are thankful that the Culver City community has and continues to put the highest priority on educating our children in a high-quality learning environment.

Completing these major facilities improvements will not be an easy task, and we appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we wrestle with the short-term inconvenience and temporary disruptions. In the end, we know that from parents and teachers to students and neighbors, the long-term benefits of these improvements will raise our District and its facilities to a whole new level.