

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
District Modernization Program: Alan Harvey Theater
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

What is Alan Harvey Theater?

Alan Harvey Theater (AHT) is one of the District's most heavily used facilities. It has an auditorium, projection room, lobby and rest rooms. The auditorium serves as a classroom for five of the seven periods of the school day, providing classroom space for roughly 90 students per day. Even the lobby is used on a regular basis for small-group classes and rehearsals. AHT also hosts student assemblies, vocal and instrumental music concerts, plays, musicals, and parent education programs.

Built in 1975, AHT is not accessible as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and does not meet all current codes. Specifically, the bathrooms, seating, stage, projection room and paths of travel throughout the building are not accessible under the ADA, and the building is not properly ventilated and sprinklered.

The District will present a bond measure to voters in June 2014 to raise funds to bring AHT into compliance with the ADA and other current requirements, modernize building systems, and create a new classroom.

If the bond measure is approved, what would be the scope of the AHT renovation?

AHT would be renovated to meet all current accessibility and fire/life safety code requirements, including: accessible seating at every level in the theater along with companion seating; center aisles for safe egress; assistive listening devices; level paths of travel throughout the theater; a lift or other means of access to the stage; and ventilation and sprinkler systems.

In addition, the AHT roof and rooftop heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) would be replaced. The roof outriggers are rotten. The HVAC components and related ductwork are in poor condition and not functioning properly. Regardless of whether the bond measure passes, the District needs to address the roof and HVAC issues, so systems work properly and AHT interior finishes are protected from damage.

Also, if the bond measure is approved, ADA accessibility would be achieved through an elevator in a new structure immediately adjacent to the existing building. This new structure allows for expansion to provide a new classroom. As noted above, the auditorium serves as a classroom for five of the seven periods of the school day. This results in significant wear and tear on the theater and ongoing maintenance costs for the District. Providing a new classroom would extend the useful life of the theater and better meet the needs of the District's Performing Arts Program.

Why wasn't renovation of AHT included in the District's recent Seismic Safety Bond Program?

Between March 2005 and November 2012, the District conducted a comprehensive program to seismically strengthen or replace school facilities. This Seismic Safety Bond Program (SSBP) was completed on schedule and on budget in 2012. (Please refer to the *Seismic*

Safety Bond Program Summary for more information about the school facilities and scope of improvements to life safety, and to the *SSBP Financial Summary* for a summary of the financing at <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/district-info/seismic-safety-bond-program>.)

As part of the SSBP, AHT was reviewed for seismic safety, fire/life safety, and accessibility. Engineers and architects determined that AHT met the engineering requirements that indicate that it is not a collapse hazard in the event of an earthquake and that occupants would be able to safely exit the building after a seismic event. Because AHT met these basic seismic safety standards, it was not included in the SSBP. It was noted that significant accessibility and other fire/life safety issues exist. As AHT met basic seismic safety standards and the fire/life safety issues could not be addressed without triggering a full-scale renovation of the entire building, the SSBP did not include work at AHT.

After completion of the SSBP in 2012, the District began to address deferred accessibility and modernization projects throughout the District, including Alan Harvey Theater.

May accessibility improvements to AHT be done in phases?

No. The District may not reconfigure the bathrooms, stage or paths of travel to make them accessible without triggering requirements to make the *entire* theater accessible. The District may make repairs to only the roof, HVAC systems, lighting, and seating without triggering the requirement to bring the entire building up to current standards.

What is the total budget for the proposed renovation of AHT?

The total project budget for the proposed AHT renovation is \$14.5 million.

What is included in the \$14.5 million budget?

The budget includes:

- estimated “hard costs” (the cost of construction);
- estimated “soft costs” (including architectural and engineering fees, fees for design review by the Division of State Architect, construction management fees, inspection and permit fees, utility fees, costs relating to relocation of the theater classroom and performance space, estimated price escalation, and furnishings, fixtures and equipment, including new seating, theater lighting and sound systems); and
- design and construction contingency funds.

The District’s architect, Quattrocchi Kwok Architects (QKA), estimates that the hard costs would be approximately \$9.8 million. Vila Construction, the District’s Construction Manager, independently reviewed and confirmed the QKA estimate as reasonable. Vila’s analysis of the hard costs for the project include: \$8.4 million for construction costs; a 5% allowance (\$480,000) for one year’s worth of cost escalation to account for the time period between development of schematic design and completion of the construction documents; and a 15% design contingency (\$1.2 million) to cover any additional

construction costs and fees for architectural revisions that might result from plan changes imposed by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) during DSA review. Vila's total estimate is **\$10.1 million**. If DSA does not require significant changes to the design, and depending upon actual bids to perform the work, the actual hard costs may be measurably less.

The District, with the assistance of Vila Construction, estimated that the soft costs and other non-construction costs would be roughly **\$2.5 million**, and that a prudent and appropriate program contingency fund would be **\$1.9 million**, bringing the project budget to \$14.5 million.

As the District found in renovating both Wildwood and Beach Schools during the SSBP, unknown conditions may exist in AHT that increase construction costs after the start of construction. For this reason, a program contingency fund is needed. Note that design contingency differs from program contingency in that design contingency allows for cost increases before the start of construction, mandated by DSA, and program contingency allows for cost increases due to unforeseen conditions discovered after the start of construction. (The program contingency is discussed below.)

Please note that, even after the budget is established, the District will engage in continual "value engineering" with the architect, construction manager, and builder, to contain and possibly reduce project costs. Value engineering is a process to assess the cost-effectiveness of building systems, products and materials. The District and Vila Construction have a strong record of value engineering during the SSBP.

What are the major components of the estimated construction costs?

QKA provided a construction cost estimate based on its schematic design in March 2013. QKA summarized four areas of work as follows:

- (1) "Existing Building-Mandatory," which includes ADA accessibility upgrades and fire/life safety code compliance, at approximately \$1.46 million;
- (2) "Existing Building-Modernization," which includes improving the auditorium and basement, fixing the roof and HVAC, and renovating electrical and plumbing service, at approximately \$3.5 million;
- (3) "Theatrical Design," which includes theater-grade lighting, AV systems, draperies and other equipment, at approximately \$1.7 million; and
- (4) "Addition-Classroom and Green Room," which includes the new adjacent building, drama classroom, and mechanical and electrical work, at approximately \$2.76 million.

The District's budget includes these costs, with one year of price escalation, as approximately \$10.1 million.

Note that many work elements are interdependent. For example, the new addition houses the elevator that provides ADA accessibility. Much of the work cannot be performed without triggering a requirement to make the entire theater accessible under the ADA.

How will the AHT project be funded?

Like the SSBP, the \$14.5 million will be funded with a combination of private donations, District modernization funds, and a Proposition 39 General Obligation School Bond. The District also will seek State matching funds for school facility construction if another State bond measure providing such funds is approved by State voters.

How much bond funding will the voters be asked to approve?

The Board of Education will make the final determination about the amount of the bond measure by the end of January 2014 after considering private donations and available modernization funds on hand.

What do the program contingencies cover? How was the program contingency percentage determined?

Unlike new construction, renovation of an existing building can involve an array of unexpected conditions. For this reason, architects and contractors plan for the unexpected. For example, opening up walls may reveal unexpected conditions (or unexpected scope of conditions) such as dry rot and termite damage. Construction details and materials may differ from what is shown on the original building plans. Construction contingency funds allow for increased costs associated with these unknowns. During the SSBP, the District established project contingencies as well as an overall program contingency, and this approach was proven successful with the completion of each project. The District would follow the same approach with AHT, with a 20% contingency.

Has the District explored other designs that would be less expensive?

As noted above, before the SSBP, engineers and architects evaluated how AHT could be made accessible. The “original concept” was to build a network of ramps from the Piedmont High School quad to AHT, with multiple entrances to the theater to ensure an accessible path of travel to seats at all seating levels. This original concept was bulky and would have reduced the usable area of the quad.

After the SSBP was completed last year, architectural designer and community member Mark Becker proposed a new solution for the AHT access issues. Mr. Becker suggested creating an accessible path of travel from the Magnolia Avenue side of AHT, essentially extending the theater lobby toward the street rather than creating a network of ramps on the quad side of the Theater. Mr. Becker also solved the need for accessibility to the stage, while at the same time providing more instructional and performance space. Mr. Becker proposed using space between AHT and Magnolia Avenue for a new adjacent building containing an elevator and a classroom that doubles as a “black box” theater.

QKA has since developed a design based on Becker’s ideas. QKA met with the District’s performing arts staff and community members to ensure that the designs would serve the needs of the performing arts program as well as meet all accessibility requirements. Compared with the original concept, the new design provides a solution to the accessibility issues that preserves the usable area of the quad and meets the needs of the performing arts programs for additional classroom space.

How does the \$14.5 million budget compare with other school theater renovations?

While each theater is unique in its needs and degree of work, seating capacity, and theater design components, rough cost comparisons can be made on a cost per square foot basis. The following recent theater projects in and around the Bay Area offer some cost comparison.

- Hillsdale High School Theater in San Mateo was recently renovated with a lobby and back stage addition. The hard costs were \$13,381,000 or \$669 per square foot (the theater area is 20,000 square feet and holds 770 seats).
- San Mateo High School Performing Arts Theater was recently renovated with a lobby addition. The hard costs were \$26,806,000 or \$547 per square foot (the theater area is 49,000 square feet and holds 1,500 seats).
- St. Francis High School in Mountain View constructed a theater in 2009 with a construction cost of \$10,787,239 or \$546 per square foot (the theater area is 19,750 square feet and holds 409 seats).

In comparison, the hard costs for renovation of AHT are estimated to be \$9.64 million (in today's dollars without escalation), or \$553 per square foot (the theater area would be 17,424 square feet and hold 365 seats).

Please note that although the seating capacity is different for each of these theaters, many costs (relating to the stage, orchestra pit, lighting and other equipment) are not dependent on number of seats.

Would it be more cost-effective to tear down AHT and build a new theater?

The cost of tearing down the existing facility and building a new theater is estimated to be between \$25 million and \$30 million, based on comparable school theaters that have been built in recent years in El Cerrito, Castro Valley, San Ramon and San Leandro.

How does the estimated cost of AHT compare with the cost to renovate Havens and Ellen Driscoll Theater?

The differences between building or renovating a theater as opposed to a school make side-by-side comparisons difficult. (The same difficulty arises when comparing the cost of remodeling a kitchen with the cost of adding a bedroom.) The hard cost to rebuild Havens Elementary School totaled \$21.1 million, or \$461 per square foot. (Havens is 45,660 square feet.) The total (combined hard and soft costs, excluding interim housing) for the new Havens Elementary School was \$27.4 million. These amounts do not include costs associated with Ellen Driscoll Theater, which has a separate project budget.

The hard costs of the Ellen Driscoll renovation totaled \$1.93 million, or \$371 per square foot. (The building is 5,200 square feet). The total (combined hard and soft costs, excluding interim housing) for Ellen Driscoll was \$2.5 million. Note that this project was not a true theater renovation, but a seismic retrofit project only. Ellen Driscoll did not require the creation of accessible pathways or seating, because the pathways already met the current accessibility requirements and there are no aisles, different seating

levels, and no fixed seats in the building. The renovation of Ellen Driscoll focused primarily on strengthening the exterior shell of the building by structurally integrating the outside walls with the building's roof. The Ellen Driscoll project did not include theatrical design that would be found in AHT, such as installing new seats, theater lighting, rigging, or a theatrical sound system. The combined project costs for Havens Elementary School (including Ellen Driscoll Theater) is \$29.9 million.

In comparison, the estimated hard costs of the proposed AHT renovation are \$553 per square foot. (AHT is 17,424 square feet.)

Although the District renovated the Wildwood and Beach auditoriums, these were included with the school's project budget, so no separate per-square-foot cost information is available for those facilities.

Why would renovation of AHT total \$14.5 million when the complete rebuild of Havens totaled \$29.9 million?

Comparing AHT to Havens is an apples-to-oranges comparison. Of all educational facilities, performing arts theaters are the most complex and expensive, and they cost more per square foot than classrooms and even specialized teaching spaces. This is because of the complexity of lighting, rigging, sound and acoustics, mechanical systems, seating, exiting, and orchestra pits. This is the case for new theaters as well as modernization of existing theaters.

Can the AHT renovation be paid for with private donations rather than a bond measure?

Eager to keep the AHT project on track for 2015 completion, a group of community members, together with the Piedmont Educational Foundation and the associated parent clubs, raised \$500,000 in private donations to encourage the District to proceed before the June election with the development of design development documents for the AHT project. These donations essentially backstop the District for costs incurred prior to the election.

The reasoning behind this private fundraising is as follows. The District reserved \$500,000 to make improvements to the AHT roof, HVAC and seating *if the voters do not approve the bond measure* to pay for the more comprehensive renovation of AHT. With community members and groups raising \$500,000 in private funding, the District could spend that amount toward the development of design development documents. If the voters ultimately reject the AHT bond measure, the \$500,000 in private funds would then pay for the deferred improvements to the AHT roof, HVAC and seating.

Although the community has been generous with these donations, there are not enough private donations to cover the full cost of modernization of AHT.

Would the District be eligible to receive State matching funds for renovation of AHT?

Yes, if and when a new State bond measure is approved. AHT would qualify the District for some State matching funds. Currently, the State has exhausted all matching funds and would require a new State-wide bond program for the District to get in line for

matching funds. The District is committed to pursuing all eligible state funds as they become available for any qualifying modernization project within the District.

What happens if the voters do not approve the June 2014 bond measure?

The Board would use the \$500,000 in private donations to make some needed repairs to the roof and HVAC systems, and replace the seating, so AHT can remain useable for some additional time, but the accessibility issues would remain unchanged. Even with these improvements, the theater infrastructure, accessibility, and fire/life safety concerns would remain. The District will need to address these issues at some point in the near future, or risk losing use of AHT. According to Vila Construction, cost escalation patterns project a 5%-7% per year increase in construction costs, which will make a renovation project more expensive in the future.