



Capital Plan Frequently Asked Questions

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How long has the District been planning North and South End Preschool Centers?

In [November of 2017](#), the District proposed two options for Early Education to the Board of School Commissioners, including building two new centers in the North and South End. At that time, the District's property services indicated that they would like permission to more fully explore these options.

2. With the driveways at Edmunds and Champlain on hold, does that mean all the projects are on hold?

The District is moving forward on all other aspects of these projects presented at the board meeting, including construction of the preschool centers and presenting to community and staff. The proposed south end preschool center and Edmunds building improvements are moving forward, requiring us to move forward with the zoning requirements for construction which includes presenting those projects to the conservation board and DRB. We have decided to temporarily place the proposed preschool access drive/Champlain and Edmunds students drop off improvements on hold as that scope of work was not scheduled to start until the spring/summer of 2019. We will take advantage of this time to engage the community and work towards refining the Champlain and Edmunds student drop off designs, with the goal to make those needed improvements in 2019.

3. When will work begin on the High School and Tech Center?

Please [click here](#) to read the recommendation for a partial demolition and reconstruction of these spaces. Included in the presentation is a timeline of what would need to happen to take a bond to the community for a vote in November.

4. Was the design phase contract for these projects publicly advertised for bidding?

No, design work is not subject to the public bid law. We have had a longstanding and good relationship with architects who've worked on these projects with us, and so we elected to continue that relationship, especially since they already have a solid understanding of our current building needs and usage.

6. Do you competitively bid office supplies, equipment purchases or transportation services?

Yes, we ask for bids on many, many things. At our most recent board meeting, we discussed the bidding process and the board approved bids on a tractor and on lockers for Hunt Middle School. You can find a list of things a District needs to put RFPs out for [on the State's website](#). or watch [this video of the May 8th Board Meeting](#) (see Chapter 8, consent agenda) for more information.

7. I thought IAA upgrades were high on the priority list, when will those improvements be made and why have they been delayed.

IAA has always one of the top priorities on the capital plan with upgrades planned to begin following the expansion of early education, ADA and student drop off issues at Edmunds, and student drop off issues at Champlain. Originally, we thought we could do work at IAA in the same year as these other improvements. Unfortunately, when we dug in we realized we would need a LOT more space for students at IAA who will be displaced during the upgrades because the amount of work cannot be completed over just one summer break. We need to complete the early education projects in order to have swing space at Ira in order to start the IAA project. As of now, IAA renovations are planned to be the first project completed following early education work, meaning we hope to start IAA renovations in summer 2020.

8. Are we consulting on energy efficiency for the buildings?

The Burlington School District is part of the Burlington 2030 District and we take energy efficiency and sustainability seriously. All of our proposed plans meet and exceed current building energy codes, with a major focus on designing energy efficient systems.

9. What is the permitting status of these projects?

The District appeared before the Conservation Board on May 7 to present a preview of the South End preschool center. A permit has been submitted for the interior renovations ONLY at Edmunds. Those plans have been approved by the DAB review, and were presented to DRB on May 16th. The District has not applied for a permit for any other projects at this time.

10. I heard there is an addition planned as part of the Capital Plan for Champlain Elementary. Can that addition be built first and used for swing space for other programs?

No. The addition to Champlain is a major project that will take longer than the summer break to accomplish. As such, building this addition is one of the projects we anticipate needing to utilize swing space for students to accomplish. The addition on Champlain is proposed to support other interior renovations at Champlain to have a dedicated separate cafeteria space from the current shared gym/cafeteria space. If we were to do the addition and use it a swing space prior to constructing the separate cafeteria space, we would potentially be adding 100 more kids to an already congested shared cafeteria.

11. Why is Ira Allen a better space to educate kids in than portable classrooms?

Ira Allen was originally designed as an education space and is currently used as an educational center for our pre-k programs. With portables, we begin to run into legal issues and space constraints (we would need waivers to use them for more than 180 days, not every school has the space to fit a portable on-site), as well as the considerable cost of moving and fitting up the portables with electric and water at each location ([\\$1.2 Million over 10 years](#)). In addition, portable classrooms are notorious for being poor and unhealthy learning spaces, often made from cheap and sometimes toxic materials. This might not be a big issue for one or two short-term projects, but are major considerations for a 10-year plan. While it is true the space at Ira is currently outdated, doing minor renovations to this space to accommodate older children is a far more sustainable, cheaper, and healthier alternative for our children.

EDMUNDS CAMPUS

1. What need would a new driveway fulfill at Edmunds?

The driveway would allow the entire complex to have one, central access point to the campus, providing a much-needed security benefit. Additionally, the Edmunds Complex has numerous accessibility issues. This new driveway would alleviate the steep grade that currently exists and serve as a tie-in to a new main entrance point that could be used by all.

2. I heard there will be a new MakerSpace in the library. Will there still be books?

YES! We are a learning institution and we love books. The current plans allows for a more efficient use of the space, with the books surrounding the MakerSpace.

3. Will there be a librarian at Edmunds?

Yes, our current librarian will remain in the library/Makerspace.

NEW EARLY EDUCATION CENTERS

1. Why are we investing in more preschool space?

Our current spaces for early education and learning are outdated, cramped, spread throughout many schools, and insufficient to meet the growing need to serve preschool students in our District. Each year there is a waitlist to get into our program, and it has been growing over the past three years in part as a response to the state law that mandates universal preschool access. Each of the last two years we have had to include an increase in our budget to support universal pre-k.

2. How many children are currently being served by Burlington School District as compared to other providers in the area?

So far this year we have provided services and/or funding for 536 children. Of those, approximately 172 attend preschool in district classrooms. We have had a waitlist district-operated classrooms for the past 4 years.

3. How are these new education centers being funded?

In 2017, Burlington passed a bond allowing us to borrow \$19 million dollars over 10 years in addition to the \$2 million dollars the district is allowed to borrow each year. Together, this \$39 million will support deferred and current maintenance needs. The original plan was to retrofit and upgrade the current Early Ed Center at IRA Allen to be a more suitable learning space. However, when we began looking even more closely Ira Allen, we began to doubt the viability of upgrading the building to suit the needs of our early education program. So in November of 2017, we raised initial concerns with the school board and suggested moving toward a second option of having two satellite locations in the North and South Ends, rather than a central location at Ira Allen.

As we looked at the two options, it became apparent that building new would be better for our students, staff, and community for a number of reasons. First, the estimated cost of renovating Ira

Allen was \$4.5-5 Million. This plan would have also required the District to lease new space for the District's administrative offices so that the students currently served in early education would have a place for learning while the renovations were occurring. Upon completion of the work the renovated space would be at full capacity and there would be no ability to expand the program in subsequent years in response to enrollment or programmatic needs. Furthermore, the District would continue to incur the cost of renting space for administrative offices in perpetuity, which significantly increased to cost of the Ira Allen plan.

Alternately, the construction of the two new preschool centers and administrative offices is estimated to cost \$5-5.5 Million. With this plan, the District does not need to move the early education students or staff until construction is complete, and new centers can be planned to account for possible growth of the early education programs. Once construction is complete and the students and staff are moved into their new spaces, Ira Allen could then be available to serve as swing space for students who will be impacted by other planned renovations/construction in the Capital Plan (IAA, Champlain, BHS and Tech Center, etc.). By using Ira Allen for this purpose, the district can avoid renting expensive module classrooms or leasing space. Eventually, when all the projects are complete there could be enough capacity to determine if IRA Allen should be sold for gained revenue back to taxpayers or utilized if enrollment continues to grow.

4. Were early childhood professionals consulted?

Yes, our Director of Early Education has been an integral part of the planning process for both options to support of Early Education. In addition, she has communicated with our early education partners.

5. Would it be possible or cheaper to contract out additional early ed work?

This is our current model. We serve all children who cannot be served at other locations throughout the city, than we fill the remaining spots. Even so, we still have a waitlist every year. There is simply not enough early education in Burlington, let alone in our school District.

6. Will these new building allow our Early Education program to grow?

With these two new buildings, we will be able to fulfill our waitlist. Just as important, the centers will allow us to consolidate staff to fewer locations, allowing them to more efficiently serve more children in better spaces. It will also free up space in our elementary schools which is sorely needed to support school specific programming ([see slide 9 in this presentation](#)).

7. Is it permissible to use the \$19 million for these projects?

Yes. The District's attorney has reviewed this issue and provided the following advice:

Q: Is the Burlington School District's present capital project plan within the scope of the authorization by the voters to issue general obligation bonds, approved on March 7, 2017?

A: Yes, the question presented to the voters was sufficient enough to show its character and purpose to accomplish capital improvements to substantially reduce the deferred maintenance of the District's buildings, it is likely that the present project plan does not materially differ from the authorization granted pursuant to the ballot question, and prior versions of the project plan are not binding upon the District or the City of Burlington so as to require the project to take the form as it was prior to the March 7, 2017 bond election.

EARLY ED, South End

7. What does the City think of the new driveway proposed at Champlain?

DPW was supportive of a driveway that would serve both Champlain and the new preschool and even offered to construct a city-maintained road between the two! We advised against this option, and asked them to consider a gated driveway that wouldn't be used by the general public and would be maintained by the District. The Champlain driveway conforms to PlanBTV standards, calls for significantly better sidewalks and paths, and leaves an option for the city to still construct bussing lanes closer to the school at some point. Additionally, first responders greatly prefer to access both the preschool and existing property services building via Pine Street.

8. How would a new building, driveway and parking lot effect Englesby Brook in the South End?

Though the planned preschool, driveway, and parking lot would add impervious surface to the property, the current stormwater mitigation system is so poor that architects believe this project would provide a *NET-BENEFIT* to the brook.

9. What will happen to the student garden, student tool shed, and community gardens at Champlain?

If there was a driveway, the student gardens and shed would be moved to the north side of the driveway or a suitable alternative would be selected from community feedback. We would work with the community gardens to determine how to best reduce the impact of this project. It may be possible to narrow or move the garden width away from the road and/or extend the length of the gardens. There is potential for water access to be located closer to the gardens as well.

10. Have there been traffic studies done around the proposed driveway off of Pine Street and/or Shelburne Road in the South End?

RSG studied traffic patterns on Pine Street and Shelburne Road. ([You can read that study here.](#)) After the Superintendent placed the plans for a Pine Street driveway on hold, our engineers were directed to study the Shelburne Road traffic more in-depth, as their initial studies were done considering Shelburne would only be used by staff. We are awaiting those results.

11. Why are you presenting to the Conservation Board if the driveways are no longer part of the plan?

Even though we are not at this time adding a new curb cut and upgraded access drive off Pine St., we are still adding a new structure and new parking next to Englesby Brook which requires us to still bring forward the plans to the Conservation Board. We do not plan to discuss the driveway.

12. Were alternative locations for Champlain considered?

As you can see from our presentation in November, we did consider other locations for the Early Ed center on the property services grounds. Many factors dictate the location of the structure such as required setbacks from Englesby Brook, soil conditions, preferred location for stormwater treatments

and available wide open green space for playgrounds and student use as well as so many different athletic and school events.

EARLY ED, North End

13. Will we be able to keep the trees, garden, and playground at CP Smith?

The plans include keeping but having to move pieces of the playground, and gardens. We have been actively working to retain as many trees as possible and the majority of the orchard will be untouched, though a few young trees will need to be relocated within the orchard.

14. Was the open space to the north of CP Smith considered for the preschool location?

Yes, however our underground geothermal wells in this area would not support the structure.

15. Was the space off of Goss Court considered for the preschool location?

In order to reduce costs, the proposed building would be connected to CP Smith, allowing it to share both infrastructure (sprinkler and fire alarm systems, electric, water, sewer, etc.) and staffing (kitchen, principals, nurses, etc.) resources. If the buildings were not connected, it is estimated the new building would cost about twice as much as the current project's projection.

16. Did you consider adding a road off of Goss Court to the new preschool center?

We looked at a road off of Gosse Court, but decided against cutting into this green space which had previously been earmarked for use as future athletic facilities.

17. How will electrical poles around Smith be addressed in construction? No new power poles, all new power will be fed underground. There is a requirement to providing a lighting plan for the parking lot, so there will be additional light poles to meet those lighting requirement for a parking lot.