



Oak Park and River Forest High School Pool and Facilities Referendum Fact Sheet

On Aug. 16, 2016, the Board of Education unanimously adopted a five-year pool and facilities plan, as well as a **bond-issue question** for the Nov. 8, 2016, ballot. The Board intends to finance the project with \$20 million in cash and is seeking the community's approval for a bond issue of up to \$25 million.

What does the pool and facilities project involve?

The work includes replacing the two 88-year old pools with a 40-meter pool and new garage on the site of the existing garage, adding classrooms to accommodate a more than 20% increase in performing arts enrollment, renovating locker rooms to mitigate health and safety issues, and improving learning spaces.

How will this work be funded?

The \$44.5 million project will be paid for with cash on hand (\$20 million, or 45% of the cost) and with voter-approved bonds (up to \$25 million, or 55% of the cost).

How will my tax bill be affected?

Visit facilities.oprfhs.org to use our tax-impact calculator. According to estimates provided by William Blair & Company:

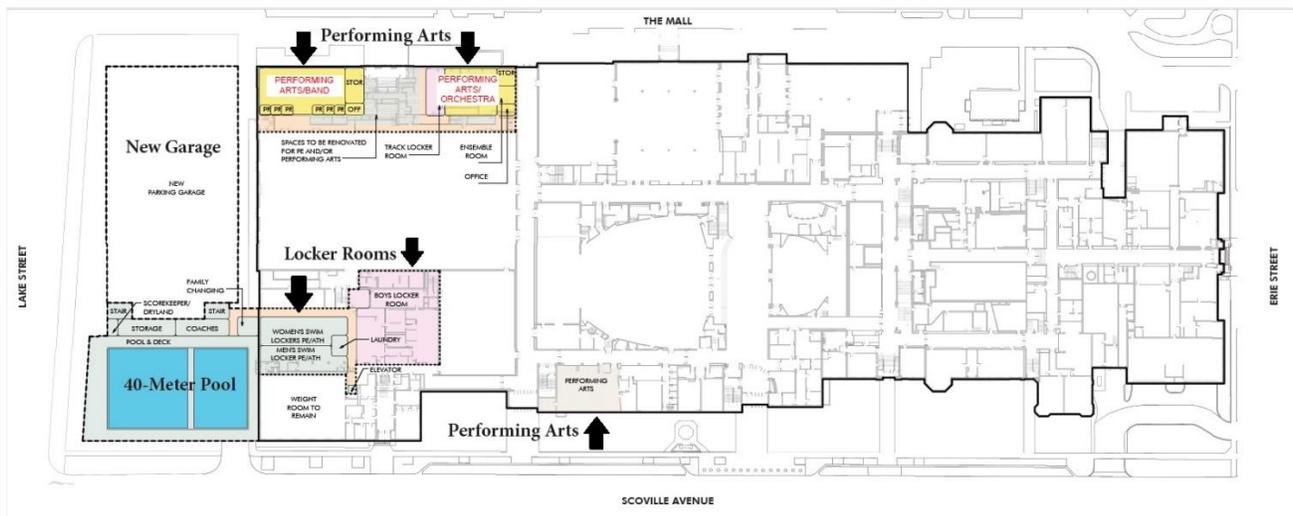
- For an **Oak Park** resident with a median home value of \$362,000, the expected tax impact would be an increase of up to \$90 in property taxes per year.
- For a **River Forest** resident with a median home value of \$530,700, the expected tax impact would be an increase of up to \$136 in property taxes per year.

Why not use more of the reserves and borrow less?

The Board is following the recommendation of its Finance Advisory Committee to budget \$20 million out of the reserves for facilities. If the Pool and Facilities Project were funded only out of reserves, the District would have to go for an operating referendum sooner. In addition, issuing bonds spreads costs over current users as well as those who will use the facilities in the future. Finally, interest rates currently are low, making this a good time to borrow.

Why is replacing the pools necessary?

The two pools are 88 years old and their anticipated lifespan was 40 to 50 years. They do not meet current design safety standards, and the mechanicals are so old that replacement parts do not always exist. The pools currently are leaking 3,000 gallons of water a day, and contractors no longer will guarantee that repairs to the foundation will hold.



Architectural Drawing of First Floor

Why is a single 40-meter pool being built instead of replacing the pools in their current locations?

We currently have two pools because boys and girls were not allowed to take swimming classes together in 1928, when the pools were built. Times have changed, and co-ed swimming classes are now the norm. Repurposing the two former pool spaces will provide much-needed additional classroom space. A single pool will allow three PE classes and their instructors to use the pool simultaneously, making it easier to group students by ability level. And varsity and junior varsity teams will be able to practice in the same space, allowing coaches to teach and mentor them together.

Why can't you use Ridgeland (or another off-campus pool)?

This was explored. But it was determined that the Ridgeland Common Pool, which currently is not covered, is not a viable solution to meet the high school's program needs. Roughly 400 students per day use the pools for physical education (PE) instruction. Class periods are 48 minutes long and would not provide sufficient instructional time in the pool once walking to and from Ridgeland, showering, and changing are factored in. This likely would have an adverse effect on instructional time for other classes following PE as well. Security and inclement weather are also concerns.

Why is additional space for performing arts instruction necessary?

Enrollment in performing arts classes has increased more than 20% in the past few years, and additional classroom space is needed to support band, orchestra, theatre, and choir.

What performing arts spaces are being added?

New band and orchestra rooms will be built on the west side of the building. The district is examining the ways to repurpose the spaces that will be vacated on the east side of the building; accommodating growth in theatre and choir have been identified as priorities.

Why is replacing the garage necessary?

Although a study commission by the Board indicated that the garage was still structurally sound, the Board agreed that a parking garage should not drive decisions about how OPRF will be used for the next several decades. Rebuilding the garage frees up some of our limited space to use for learning and extracurriculars rather than parking.

Why are there fewer parking spaces when enrollment is increasing?

A garage with 61 fewer spaces than the current garage will cost less and allows more dollars to be devoted to learning spaces.

Where will people park while the garage is under construction?

The District and the village will work together to create a short-term parking plan.

When will construction take place, and how long will it last?

Construction could begin as early as spring 2017 or as late as winter 2018 depending on the timing of a number of components in the construction process, such as completion of final drawings, finalizing a parking plan for construction with the village, approval of zoning variances, etc. Overall, the project is expected to take roughly two years; work will occur in phases so that not all the areas are under construction at once.

Why not fund this project with private donations?

Mounting a capital campaign is a significant undertaking, initially involving research to determine whether such a large investment of time would even be fruitful and who would best lead a campaign, whether the district, a citizens' group, or a consultant. The time required to raise the funds can be lengthy, with no guarantee of the outcome. The district may consider raising private funds for future projects, but given that the facility needs are urgent, particularly replacing the pools, the Board opted to bring the question of funding to the community via a referendum now, without seeking supplemental private donations.

When can I vote?

Election Day is Nov. 8, 2016. Early voting will take place Oct. 24 – Nov. 7, 2016. Additional voting information, including directions for voting by mail are available at cookcountyclerk.com.