

 	<p align="center">ISD #709 Duluth Public Schools District Facilities Project</p>
	<p align="center">Monthly Progress Report January 2021</p>
<p align="center">Address: 215 N. 1st Avenue East, Duluth, MN 55802</p>	

Background:

- In June of 2019, Board Members determined the existing Historic Old Central was failing and a major investment of nearly \$48.5 million would be required.
- In late 2019, a working group led by was formed to review and analyze the current viability of the sites and to determine what options the district should consider relocating the programs currently being housed and operated within the existing Historic Old Central High School (HOCHS) facility located in downtown Duluth. The result of these efforts culminated in the development of a \$31.5M plan that would address the following:
 - Construction of a new District Services Center facility on the existing Central Hill site
 - Renovations and additions for the District facilities department
 - Construction of a new facility for the District transportation department
 - Associated off-site improvements and roadways
 - Site development and demolition of existing facilities
- In January 2020, the School Board approved a process for District administration and the working group to engage District lobbyists and local legislators to seek approval of special legislation that would enable the District to fund these improvements. This legislation would allow the District to address the identified needs for \$17M less than the cost to repair HOCHS.
- In October of 2020, the legislation was formally approved as part of the State of Minnesota special legislative session.

Recent Progress and Activities:

- In October 2020, the existing HOCHS facility is now under a purchase agreement with a developer.
- The Central on the Hill site is currently in active negotiations and the District has been in discussions with a number of interested parties.

- Over the past few months, the working group has continued to develop and refine a process to further develop the proposed facility plan into reality. The project consulting team has now been formally engaged by the District, and planning efforts are proceeding.

- The following planning sub-groups have been formed to further study the specific program and space needs of the various District departments:
 - Alternative Learning Center (ALC) / Academic Excellence On-Line (AEO)
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE)
 - Facilities / Transportation / Print Shop
 - Hill Site Re-Development / City Approvals
 - District Services Center (human resources, curriculum, SPED, finance, superintendents, community ed, food & nutrition, Headstart, IT, etc.)

- Sub-Group meetings have been initiated and members have started to engage key stakeholders and staff to provide guidance and leadership throughout the planning process.

- A project communications plan has been developed to ensure that all internal and external stakeholders are fully updated on an on-going basis. This communications plan will include monthly status reports to summarize current and upcoming activities that will ultimately be uploaded to a project webpage. Weekly updates will also be produced and sent to the District administration for internal distribution. Regular check-in meetings with each sub-group and the City of Duluth are also being scheduled.

Upcoming Activities and Next Steps:

- Sub-Groups will continue their progress of engaging stakeholders and further developing plans and solution alternatives for each District department.

- Project consultants will be working with the District administration to comply with all required approvals associated with the special legislation process. Notable aspects of this process include:
 - Holding a public hearing to review the proposed facilities plan – Currently scheduled for 3-2-21
 - Development of required documentation for submission to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for review and comment – tentatively scheduled for Late April 2021
 - Development of a detailed financial analysis of the proposed plan for submission to the MDE

- The consulting team will continue to work with District representatives to further prepare the Central on the Hill site for re-development. Site survey work and preliminary soil borings are in progress, and an evaluation of all related roadways and infrastructure is being developed.

- Work will continue in preparation for the 3-2-21 Public Hearing and further development of the detailed financial analysis.