



Mill Valley Middle School Construction Project: Modern Teaching and Learning Facilities to Benefit Our Community for Generations

FACTS and FAQs

Mill Valley Middle School Construction Project:

When Measure G passed in 2022, the Mill Valley School District (MVSD) set forth on an exciting journey to modernize, upgrade, renovate, and repair school buildings, classrooms, and other facilities across the District. One of the most compelling aspects of the Measure G project plan is the construction of a new Mill Valley Middle School (MVMS) facility, designed to replace the current school, which was built in 1972. MVSD is excited to create and provide modern, accessible, and beautiful learning facilities in service to Mill Valley students and families for generations to come. Our decision to pursue this endeavor centers on ensuring that our children have access to the best possible educational environment, setting them up for success now and in the future.

A Vision for Today and Tomorrow

Current Mill Valley students and families, as well as future generations, can look forward to upgraded classroom facilities - collaborative and flexible learning spaces which will best support the learning needs of today and the future. The new Mill Valley Middle School will better enable our students to learn, and our education professionals to provide great teaching and support. Considering the fact that this project represents the most substantial investment in education our District and community have undertaken, it is essential that we conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all potential options and alternatives in order to maximize the value of this significant investment. Also part of the Measure G plan are important infrastructure upgrades, including electrical, plumbing, heating and ventilation systems, and improved fire and earthquake safety.

Researching Options for a New, State-of-the-Art Middle School

Mill Valley Middle School is an aging facility in need of dramatic upgrades. Consequently, the District is researching three potential options for the construction/renovation of MVMS. Two of those options involve renovating and rebuilding on the current campus footprint, and the third option would use the adjacent field as a build site.

Understandably, the option to construct on the adjacent field (which is part of the MVMS property) has raised some questions in the community because it has been used for community recreation and social events for many years.

Criteria for Selecting the Optimal Plan

At the heart of our decision-making process lies a steadfast commitment to prioritizing the well-being and educational achievement of EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY. Ultimately, the MVSD Board of Trustees will make a decision on which site provides the best learning experience for our students. This decision will not be subjective or arbitrary. The decision to determine the best of the three options will be based on a diligent review of the educational value for students; cost; timeline to execute; community impact; and other data gathered from MVSD’s Maintenance, Operations, and Safety Department; legal counsel; community feedback; and other environmental impact studies.

What is the Current Status?

No decision has been made at this time. All three options are being researched by public education construction experts, and MVSD administration has been, and will continue to meet with community leaders and community members to gather input on the pros and cons associated with each option. All information gathered will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a Special Meeting on February 27th. The Board anticipates making a decision on the middle school location at the March 7, 2024 Board meeting.

Thank you for following our progress and thank you for your support of Measure G, an investment in our public schools, and our students for generations to come.

Frequently Asked Questions About the Mill Valley Middle School Construction Project:

Why is MVSD Considering Building a Middle School at the Friends Field?

The Board is considering three options. Two involve construction on the current middle school footprint, and the third option involves construction on the Friends Field portion of the MVMS property. We added the Friends Field option when we learned the District owns the property and that constructing on the field could potentially benefit our students and staff in a number of ways, such as:

- It ensures continuity of teaching and learning and the quality of the “Middle School Experience” because there would be no need for temporary classrooms or student/staff relocation during construction
- Funds would be better allocated directly into Measure G projects since we would not need to invest in portables or other associated relocation costs for the temporary classrooms and campus.
- Building at Friends Field moves the school campus further away from the Mill Valley wastewater treatment plant, which has been the source of complaints from students, families and teachers in the past.

Has the Board given direction to build on Friends Field?

No, the Board instructed staff to assess the feasibility of this option, along with two other alternatives. As of now, no decisions have been made.

What criteria will the Board use to make its decision regarding Friends Field?

The Board will consider the following four categories:

1. Teaching and learning, and impacts on students and staff
2. Overall cost
3. Timeline – from concept to completion
4. Impacts on the broader community

Ultimately, the MVSD Board of Trustees will make a decision on which site provides the best learning experience for all students.

Is it true the District recently discovered that MVSD is the owner of Friends Field?

The District confirmed through a title search that the property adjacent to the Community Center, known as “Friends Field,” is owned by the District.

Why would you consider “Friends Field” when you know our community relies on that space?

The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to consider all options that make sense for student learning and to optimize resources. That said, we do hear the community concerns and the Board is resolute in its commitment to consider these concerns in all decision-making.

Is there a City / District Joint Use Agreement in place for facilities?

There is no formal agreement between the District (the owner of the property) and the City of Mill Valley. The most recent title review shows that there has not been an agreement for nearly 20 years. In 1979, the District and the City entered into a Joint Use Agreement, which governed the use of the property until that agreement expired in 2004.

Does the City have any legal rights to the land at Friends Field?

No. There has not been a formal agreement between the District (the owner of the property) and the City of Mill Valley for 20 years. In 1979, the District and the City entered into a Joint Use Agreement, which governed the use of the property until that Agreement expired in 2004.

Why must the Board make a decision by March?

In essence, the March timeline is a logistical necessity. If we choose to build on the current middle school site, we need to acquire and set up an interim campus with around 32 temporary (portable) classrooms. Per building code, this requires the campus to be designed and built as a permanent campus.

To meet the goal of completing the new school by the 2027 school year, we must plan backward for the two options involving temporary classrooms. This ensures sufficient time for ordering and installing the portables by the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year.

(cont'd) We are targeting the March 7th meeting of the Board of Trustees to make a decision about the optimal option for student learning in order to have the time necessary to accommodate temporary units, if they are required. The option to construct on Friends Field would not require temporary classrooms.

Why is a new school proposed? Why not renovate?

Renovation of a 52 year-old building poses a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to bring it up to 21st century educational, safety and accessibility standards. These issues would be expensive and time-consuming to solve, including a full seismic and foundation retrofit, compliance with current codes and regulations (public schools are subject to some of the state's most rigorous building codes), significant mechanical, electrical and environmental renovations to bring the building up to technology standards required for the state-of-the-art educational facility we want to create for our students. *The cost of renovating the existing facility would be similar to the cost of building a new school.*

The middle school, built in 1972, is set for an upgrade through Measure G, enabling the District to create a campus aligned with 21st-century teaching and learning standards. The plan includes enhancing science, technology, engineering, and math classrooms, as well as lab space. Collaborative, project-based, and flexible learning areas will be established to enhance student support. Furthermore, the funding will be used to modernize outdated electrical, plumbing, heating, and ventilation systems, contributing to improved air quality, fire safety, and earthquake resilience. The new building will also address community and school district concerns related to sea level rise.

What would prevent the District from using Friends Field for portables during construction, then returning the field to its original use after the project is completed?

We are examining the costs involved and completing necessary environmental studies before placing units on the field. Additionally, we would need to factor in the added cost to repair and restore the field to its original use. We are committed to optimize Measure G resources to support teaching and learning environments that support educational excellence for our students.

What is the difference between hard and soft costs for a construction project, and why do the soft costs for this project seem so high?

Industry standard soft costs can range from 25%-50% of a project's total budget, which has been validated based on historical data. The middle school estimated soft cost is currently estimated around \$65M which would amount to roughly 35% of the total project costs, which seems reasonable for the middle school project. Examples of hard vs. soft costs can be seen here (link to image). This slide is from a presentation delivered to the Board of Education at public meetings on 2/1 and 2/8. The complete presentation showing all three options [can be seen here](#).

Is there a cost saving by building on the field?

Estimates indicate that the option to build on the field could result in millions in cost savings. This is one of the many reasons the District decided to investigate this option further. You can find the updated cost estimate on the [dedicated "Mill Valley Middle School Renovation" web page](#).

Is the District still moving forward on the elementary school bond projects?

The District is moving forward with the modernizations as outlined in Measure G Priority 1 projects. The design and construction teams have been engaged and are currently working on scope validation for Tam Valley and Strawberry Point elementary schools, and will proceed with Old Mill, Park and Edna Maguire per Measure G schedule.

Is the District in communication with the City of Mill Valley regarding this process?

The Board of Trustees and the Mill Valley School District highly appreciate the City of Mill Valley as a crucial community partner. We are committed to collaborating with city leaders to ensure that this process remains inclusive, transparent, and takes into account our shared history as community partners

Are there safety concerns involving any of the three options the District is exploring?

The engineering team thoroughly examined all documents related to the Middle School site. Our environmental consultant, Ninyo & Moore, conducted a comprehensive review of historical documentation and found no unusual issues that

cannot be addressed through mitigation. As the design advances, the environmental consultant will collaborate with public agencies to secure approvals for the mitigation plan, incorporating safety measures for those in the surrounding areas.

This process will be meticulous, involving oversight from various public agencies for all available options, prioritizing the safety of students, staff, construction crews and the community in the district's planning and construction.

How can we communicate with Board Members to tell them how we feel?

Please send your thoughts to the Board Members at:
letterstotheboardoftrustees@mvschools.org. They are receiving and reading every message.