



Public Comment Analysis

Date: June 22, 2015

Topic: Proposed Amendment to 2015-19 Five Year Capital Plan

Date of Panel Vote: June 23, 2015

Summary of Proposal

The Department of Education’s Five Year Capital Plan (the “Plan”) sets forth the funds allocated for the creation of new school buildings, major renovations to existing school buildings, and mandated programs. The FY2015 – 2019 Plan was approved by the City Council in June 2014, with a total budget of \$12.8 billion. The Department of Education (“DOE”) committed to amending the Plan annually. The DOE has now issued a proposed 2015 annual amendment (the “Proposed Amendment”) to the Plan. The following chart summarizes the highlights of the current Plan and the Proposed Amendment:

	Current Adopted	Proposed Amended
Total Budget	\$12.8 billion	\$13.46 billion
Capacity	\$4.35 billion	\$4.81 billion
Capital Investment	\$4.99 billion	\$4.96 billion
Mandated Program	\$3.46 billion	\$3.69 billion
Number of seats	32,560*	32,629*

* Includes 806 seats funded for design only in this Plan. Funding for construction phase for the project associated with these seats will be required in the next five-year Plan.

Summary of all public comments received to date

Written comments were received from two Community Groups, eight parents, one teacher, and one Community Board member. The following is a summary of the issues raised in these comments:

1. Capacity:

- a. Suggests the DOE double the number of new seats in the Capital Plan. Specific areas of concern are as follows:
 - i. Current overcrowding / high class sizes / loss of cluster rooms
 - ii. Population projections and the Mayor's Plan for market rate (160,000) and affordable (200,000) housing units
 - iii. Reported \$2 billion cut to the 10 year capital plan

- b. Suggests unsiting of and concerns with HS583 in Queens. In particular, the following was discussed:
 - i. Lack of clarity concerning the nature and configuration of the building
 - ii. Negative factors including
 - a) Traffic congestion
 - b) Safety due to increased traffic
 - c) Two high schools on the same street
 - d) Overcrowding buses
 - e) Competition between two schools for the same students.

Analysis of Issues Raised, Significant Alternatives Proposed

1. Capacity Issues:

- a. The Plan considers many competing priorities. Due to the size and age of our building inventory, the DOE must continue to invest in our current building stock to upgrade existing structures and prevent them from falling into disrepair. Furthermore, funding is required for projects mandated by local law or City agencies. These competing priorities along with limited funding, only allows for the creation of approximately 33,000 seats of the identified 49,000 seat need. To fund the remaining identified seat need, approximately \$1.7 billion of additional capital funding would be required.
 - i. While the average class size varies between 23 to 28 (Kindergarten through eighth grade), new capacity is only one way to achieve reduction of class size. Another capital program to address selected localized overutilization is the Class Size Reduction Program. This \$490million program recognizes the need for targeted investments of additional resources to bring class sizes down. The program addresses class size issues and facilitates a greater level of equity to school usage within districts.
 - ii. The analysis for this Plan includes a multi-dimensional review and analysis of localized capacity and enrollment patterns within each district. The result is a set of recommendations for each district that takes into

account the needs within each area of the district within funding limitations. These recommendations will be reviewed annually based on updated enrollment projections, capacity changes and housing information. Furthermore, the DOE will also work with the administration on “Housing New York: A Five-Borough, 10-Year Plan” to build or preserve 200,000 affordable housing units throughout New York City which may result in adjustments to enrollment projections or capacity needs. The DOE will continue to work with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) as well as other partners in the Administration on any land use proposal or other actions as part of Housing New York and assess the potential impacts on school enrollment and utilization.

- iii. The proposed \$2 billion budget cut is not finalized and is not expected to affect funding for this Five Year Capital Plan.

- b. The Plan has identified a need for 5,604 high school seats in Queens, and allocates funding for 2,802 seats. Some Queens high schools are experiencing over-utilization, especially those in the northeastern part of Queens. The HS 583 project will provide for a large number of high school seats. However, the siting of HS 583 in Queens is in the early stage of the process. Like other projects, this site will be subject to the Environmental Impact Analysis prior to final determination.
 - i. As part of our public review process, this site will be brought to the Community Board for review and comment. The DOE and SCA will welcome collaboration from community members. Part of the public review process includes further discussion of the configuration of the school.
 - ii. Part of the Environmental Impact Analysis will include:
 - a) Traffic studies that will show the impact of a new school;
 - b) The DOE will work with NYC DOT to implement further safety measures;
 - c) Due to the overcrowding of some high schools in northeastern Queens, analysis of this project will be further developed;
 - d) Traffic studies also include impact on ridership of MTA buses; and
 - e) This comment did not involve a Capital Plan related issue.

Information regarding where the full text of the revised proposed item may be obtained

The proposed amendment to the FY2015 – 2019 Capital Plan can be found on the Department of Education’s website:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadership/PEP/publicnotice/2014-2015/June232015PEPCapitalPlan>

Changes Made to the Proposal

No changes have been made to this proposal as a result of the comments received.