

AUSTIN ISD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER SITE SELECTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why is AISD moving forward with selecting a site for the Performing Arts Center (PAC) now, especially given the current climate and discussion about closing other facilities?

The District is moving forward with selecting a site for the PAC to allow the District to keep its promise to the voters who approved funds to purchase a site and construct a PAC. Austin voters have twice approved bond funding for a district-wide Performing Arts Center (PAC). Under the 2004 Bond Program, partial funding for a PAC was approved. Under the 2008 Bond Program, voters approved total funding for a PAC facility and land acquisition. The District takes very seriously the promise to bond election voters to complete all the projects that were approved for funding.

Moving forward with the purchase of the PAC site ensures the District is able to secure a centrally located site and allows it to acquire the site at a more advantageous cost than will likely be available at a later time. The funding provided to the District through bond proceeds can only be used for capital expenditures and cannot be used for salaries, utilities services, or other similar operational expenses.

Although the land acquisition and construction costs are fully funded through dedicated bond funds, given the current budget challenges, the District is considering how the operation of the PAC will affect future general maintenance and operation (M&O) funds to ensure that the timing of the opening of the PAC is compatible with the District's budget.

2. Wasn't funding for the PAC approved in 2004? Why has it taken so long to select a site?

In 2004, voters approved bonds to partially fund a performing arts facility for Austin ISD, with the assumption that other matching funds would be found. The outside funding did not materialize. Under the 2008 Bond Program, voters approved total funding for a PAC facility and land acquisition. In 2008, after the bond package was approved, the District began the process to locate an appropriate site for the facility.

3. Why did AISD select Mueller for its location of the PAC?

AISD staff used two sets of criteria in evaluating potential PAC sites. The first set of criteria was developed by the Performing Arts Center Task Force (PACTF), who was charged with developing prioritized specific criteria for the selection of the best possible site for the location of the district-wide PAC. The second set of criteria was the District's standard site selection criteria, used for evaluating general logistical attributes of a site.

The District evaluated 28 submitted proposals, as well as three AISD-owned properties. These sites were ranked according to how well each met the criteria and, while all 28 proposals submitted had strengths and weaknesses, each site's score was an overall assessment of all the criteria.

The recommended site, which is located within the Mueller redevelopment, had the highest score based on the criteria. According to both sets of criteria, the site's strengths include, but are not limited to:

- Efficiency of location (site dimensions that allow for appropriate orientation of buildings for efficient and safe pedestrian and vehicle movement)
- Central location in the District (as compared to other candidate sites)
- Availability of all necessary utilities
- Proximity of mass transit
- Potential for mixed-use or joint use
- Adjacent uses (availability of nearby amenities and services)

4. When will construction begin?

Assuming a 10-month design and bidding period for the project, the earliest that construction could start is March 2012. Although, given the current budget challenges, the construction and/or operation of the PAC may be postponed in order not to incur operational costs.

5. When is the PAC anticipated to open?

Assuming a 16-month construction period, the project could be completed by June 2013, and ready for use by the start of the 2013-2014 school year. Although, given the current budget challenges, the construction and/or operation of the PAC may be postponed in order not to incur operational costs.

6. How much is AISD paying for the site?

The price for the 4.46-acre site in the Mueller redevelopment, located along Mueller Boulevard between East 51st Street and Barbara Jordan Boulevard, is approximately \$4 million.

7. How much will the PAC cost to build? How is it being paid for? Will it be built entirely with bond money?

The project will be funded entirely through the voter-approved 2008 Bond Program. The construction budget, design costs, permits, fees, etc. for the project is \$36 million, which includes the construction of the PAC building and a 400-space parking garage.

8. Couldn't the money being used for the PAC be used for something more critical? Salaries? More urgent facility projects?

Funding provided to the District through bond programs is only permitted for capital expenditures and cannot be used for salaries, utilities services, or other similar operational expenses.

Voters approved funds specifically for the construction of a PAC, and the District takes very seriously the promise to bond election voters to complete all the projects that were approved for funding.

9. How large will the PAC be? How many square feet? What all will it include? How many seats? How large will the stage be?

Design for the PAC will begin once the site is purchased; the PAC is planned to be approximately 60,000 square feet with a 1,200-seat main auditorium and a 250-seat black box theater. The facility is anticipated to include: a performance stage, seating area, loading dock, dressing rooms, lobby and concessions area. Site work will include parking for the facility in the form of a parking garage, as well as a pedestrian plaza, landscaping and storm water control improvements. The parking garage may also include a design that assists in screening the parking garage from public view.

10. How many parking spaces are needed for the PAC?

Planning for the PAC includes a parking garage with 400 spaces.

11. Will a garage be built to accommodate the parking? When will that be built? Who will build it? Will there be temporary parking before the garage is built? Will the garage serve more than the PAC?

A garage built by AISD will be ready for use when the facility opens. Temporary parking should not be necessary. The possible leasing of parking spaces in the garage during times it is not in use for AISD activities will be explored as a potential source of additional revenue.

12. What will be done to mitigate traffic issues as a result of the PAC?

AISD staff conducted a thorough site selection process that included consideration of efficient and safe pedestrian and vehicular movement and proximity to mass transit. The site is suited for this type of use as adjacent, existing and future roadways and improvements are designed with the capacity to manage the anticipated traffic. Circulation patterns for buses and deliveries on the site will be taken into account in the design process.

13. Who will design and build the PAC?

The Board of Trustees selected Pfluger Associates Architects, LP to provide design services and American Constructors as the Construction Manager at Risk for this project.

14. When will a design be available?

Once a site has been purchased, the design phase will take approximately 10 to 12 months.

15. Will the PAC be sustainably built? Will there be any special green-building features incorporated into the design?

All green-building strategies possible, such as high-reflective roofing, ultra energy efficient heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system, and building orientation, will be utilized in this project in order to receive at least a 2-Star rating with the Austin Energy Green Building Program (AEGBP) and the U.S.G.B.C. LEED Silver designation.

At the start of the 2004 Bond Program, the 2004 Citizens' Bond Advisory Committee (CBAC) encouraged the District to consider an enhanced environmental focus for new facilities, new construction improvements and additions that had been approved. The CBAC also developed a list of sustainability objectives that would help guide the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to improve energy and water efficiency and indoor environmental quality in its facilities through the renovations and new construction planned in the 2004 Bond Program and other District efforts related to environmental stewardship.

To attain the sustainability goals identified by the 2004 CBAC, the District contracted with ACR Engineering, Inc., sustainability consultants, for assistance with these efforts. ACR Engineering, Inc. joined with the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems (CMPBS) and Studio D Consulting + Design to form the Energy, Water, and Sustainability (EWaS) consulting team, which plays an active part in each project's development during design, construction, and operation. During design, EWaS advises on how to best integrate "green" building principles and energy efficiency measures into the project. During construction, EWaS is involved to ensure that all systems are installed as required. EWaS also works with the AISD Maintenance Department to test and optimize building mechanical and electrical systems and with the AEGBP to document the District's accomplishments.

16. What uses will the PAC serve? Will there be limits on when or how often the PAC can hold evening events or activities?

All District band, orchestra, theater, dance and visual arts students will be served by the PAC. Use of the PAC will be available to the community at a fee when there are no conflicts with District use. Currently, the District has no performing arts facility large enough to accommodate district-wide events and has to rent other facilities.

17. Will performances be open to the public (non-students, non-parents of students)?

Under current District policy, fine arts performances are open to the public.

18. Will the PAC be named something else?

District policy (New Facilities-CW-Local) permits the Board of Trustees to name facilities. Facilities may be named for individuals, places such as landmarks or neighborhoods, or for other reasons as determined by the Board. When the Board is considering naming a new facility, nominations are accepted from the public and notice of the naming process is broadly disseminated.

19. How can the community stay up to date on the progress of the PAC?

As the process advances, the Performing Arts Center Task Force (PACTF) will continue to oversee the development of the PAC and the District will provide future opportunities for the community to provide feedback.

For more information about the PAC or the bond programs in general, please visit the Apple At Work Bond Program section of the Austin ISD website – accessible via the “Bond Programs” link at www.austinisd.org. The District encourages all interested parties to sign up for bond information email updates. Question or comments may also be submitted through the website or by calling the bond hotline at 512-414-BOND (2663).