

A Better High School Plan For Trenton

September 25, 2009

Dear Supporters of Trenton High:

Many thanks to everyone who attended Wednesday's FAB meeting. We would especially like to thank the NJ Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for strongly endorsing the plan to renovate and modernize Trenton Central High School. The plan is online at <http://www.savetrentonhigh.org/> and is discussed more fully by Stephen Doyle below.

At the meeting, the SDA made their presentation to demolish all but a token of Trenton High and construct a "purely conceptual" rectangle on top of the baseball fields. Kris Kolluri, the head of the SDA, made the state's presentation and answered questions from the public, despite his earlier pronouncement that "the time for talk has come and gone."

The SDA was provided copies of our plan and Mr. Kolluri agreed to vet the plan, but stated toward the end of the meeting, "that is all I will do." For an alternative plan that will create the same modern learning environment as state's plan **AND** cost \$17 million less, we expect a more productive, open and transparent decision-making process from a state agency spending taxpayer dollars. The time is now to make our voices heard.

Go to <http://www.savetrentonhigh.org/speak.html> to contact Governor Corzine and our elected politicians and tell them to support A Better High School Plan For Trenton.

Yours truly,

Glenn Modica

Below is a summary of the meeting and A Better High School Plan For Trenton from Stephen Doyle, who developed the plan:

A Better High School Plan was prepared in reaction to an apparent bias for new construction by the NJSDA. To be clear, when the SDA prepared their feasibility study, the renovation proposal was 400,000 sf and the new construction proposal was 320,000 sf. The 80,000 sf difference in size seemed unrealistic, so a group of residents have volunteered a creative solution which accommodates modern facilities while preserving the best portions of TCHS.

We presented our plan followed by the SDA at the yearly Facilities Advisory Board meeting. The plan accommodates the educational program in less area than new construction, delivers a school in the same time as the SDA's proposal, and comes in at \$17 Million below the project budget. Note that additional savings could be realized if the SDA funds a proper roof replacement and shell improvements prior to major renovations. Our cost estimates and plans were prepared with input from licensed architects and cost estimators who work frequently on schools projects and with the SDA.

Email: abetterplan@gmail.com • Web: www.savetrentonhigh.org
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Supporters:

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South Trenton Area Residents Society • South Broad Community Civic Association
Cadwalader Heights Civic Association • Trees for Trenton • Concerned Parents • City Residents

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The ball is in the SDA's court now. They now need to justify why they are unwilling to consider a more cost-effective proposal in the midst of an economic crisis.

The SDA immediately sprung on the defensive at the meeting alleging that community input (which comes in once a year because of the infrequency of our FAB meetings) is holding up the project. The State was trying to lay blame for delays on the shoulders of residents of our City.

Furthermore, while the SDA promised to review our proposal, it was clear that they sought to discredit our claims immediately. Most disturbing is the idea that State bureaucrats wield transformative power over our City's form and future- without community input and without consequence to those making the monumental decisions.

Unlike the State, we are trying to make our proposal very publicly available to all residents of Trenton. Please forward on to other residents for their input and information. Hopefully the State will eventually post their plans as well (we had to do multiple OPRA requests to find out what was being proposed- and were even chastised for doing so). Please let your voice be heard, let our local elected leaders know how you feel about this process.

Sincerely,

Stephen Doyle

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