

BOND AND MILL LEVY REQUEST

Politics, School News / By The Villager / October 10, 2024

BY FRED A MIKLIN

GOVERNMENTAL REPORTER

On August 12, the Cherry Creek School District Board of Education (CCSD) voted unanimously to ask voters to approve a phased-in mill levy increase expected to be \$9 million for 2025 (Ballot Measure 4A) and a \$950 million school bond (Ballot Measure 4B). These measures are on voters' ballots arriving in the mail early next week.

The Villager sat down with Scott Smith, CCSD Chief Financial and Operating Officer, to get a more in-depth understanding of these requests.

Addressing the size of the bond issue, Smith told us, "We're doing what other school districts have already done, which is start to replace old buildings with new buildings." He pointed to Newton Middle School at 4401 E. Arapahoe Road in the Littleton School District, replaced with a new building and a new sports stadium three years ago, as an example, adding, "The reason the numbers are so big is because we run really big schools. The West Building alone at Cherry Creek High School (CCHS) has more square footage than any comprehensive high school in Douglas County. Just to replace the West Building (one of four discrete buildings on CCHS's 82-acre campus) will cost \$200 million."

Regarding the 70-year-old CCHS campus, "The school is the kids, the teachers, the parents, the staff...(but) the building your school is in is falling apart...We've been closing three to four classrooms a week in the CCHS West Building and moving classes outside because we have sewage issues and we even found black mold (a known carcinogen). Going outside is great in the middle of September. It's not going to be great in a few months. If we want CCHS to continue to be the flagship high school in the district, we have to invest in it. We want excellence for our kids, our families, our teachers, our staff. We want them to be in safe, healthy buildings. It doesn't make sense to allow them to fall apart."

New buildings also allow for up-to-date environmental design, Smith told *The Villager*. "There are new

We use cookies on our website to give you the most relevant experience by remembering your preferences and repeat visits. By clicking "Accept", you consent to the use of ALL the cookies.

[Cookie settings](#) ACCEPT

the periphery. We are working with law enforcement to figure out how to maintain the campus feel, while maintaining safety and security.”

Those issues extend to the design of parking lots and the traffic flow around the campus, which CCSD is collaborating with the City of Greenwood Village to design, for the benefit of the community around the CCHS campus, as well as the students, focusing on the campus’ impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. He also noted, “Every design we’ve looked at adds 200 to 300 parking spaces around the campus.”

Smith emphasized that the only decisions that have been made about the new CCHS Greenwood Village campus are the tentative locations of the school buildings and the removal of the two administration buildings to an alternative location off the campus. All design decisions for the school buildings will be made through a collaborative process that includes extensive input from teachers, parents, students, and community members.

If voters approve the bonds, the \$950 million is expected to be borrowed in four separate tranches over about four years. The initial amount will be \$250 million. Under state law, CCSD must spend 85% of bond proceeds within three years and 100% within five years, so bonds will only be sold when the district has final plans in place to spend the money, thus voters will not pay interest on borrowed money until CCSD is ready to spend it. If interest rates continue to decline over the next few years, as the market expects, taxpayers’ costs will go down.

Smith told *The Villager* that CCSD plans to have a “retail period” for district residents to purchase some of the tax-exempt bonds, which he expects will pay 5% interest with an average term of 20 years. These high-quality investments are generally scooped up quickly by institutional investors.

The mill levy override will be phased in over about four years, going up by only about one mill in 2025. Smith does not expect homeowners’ property taxes to increase over the \$3/month per \$100,000 in actual value that CCSD has estimated, over the 20-year expected term of the bonds, because property values generally rise over time. Since the amount needed to repay the bonds will be established when they are sold, increased property values will result in a decrease in the mill levy.

The Villager wanted to know if CCSD had empirical data that showed that updated facilities had a demonstrated positive impact on student achievement.

We use cookies on our website to give you the most relevant experience by remembering your preferences and repeat visits. By clicking “Accept”, you consent to the use of ALL the cookies.

[Cookie settings](#) ACCEPT

that a sweeping report published in 2023 that “analyzed data from more than 15,000 school bond ballot referenda in 28 states between 1990 and 2017, showed that schools “can expect student test scores to rise significantly after they invest local dollars to fix leaky HVAC systems or patch failing roofs,” and that investing in new athletic facilities or expanded classroom space can be expected to increase local property values. The study concluded that there is, “a growing body of evidence asserting that higher-quality school buildings translate to better academic outcomes...”

Cherry Creek Innovation Campus expansion	January 2025 – July 2026
Laredo Middle School replacement	Summer 2025 - Winter 2026
Hollys consolidation into one K-5 school	Spring/Summer 2025 – Summer 2026
Overland High School/Institute of Science & Technology renovation	Summer 2025 – Summer 2026
Cherry Creek Campus tear down of two administration buildings and CCHS West Building and construction of new CCHS West Building	Spring 2026 – Spring 2028

We also wanted to know the projected time frame for construction of the planned capital improvements, if the voters approve the bonds on November 5. We were provided the following tentative construction schedule (above).

CCSD residents who want more information can find it on the district’s website at <https://www.cherrycreekschools.org/MillandBond>.

[← Previous Post](#)

[Next Post →](#)

RECENT STORIES

Villager 2024 Third Quarter Recap

Denver International Airport features photography by recipients of corneal transplants through the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank

BARBWIRE BOB – 10-10-24

BANK NOTE – The Solution to Inflation

We use cookies on our website to give you the most relevant experience by remembering your preferences and repeat visits. By clicking “Accept”, you consent to the use of ALL the cookies.

[Cookie settings](#)

Toyota bZ4X is all-electric new model

LEGAL

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Refund Policy](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

To subscribe call 303-773-8313

\$62 a year.

✉ Susan@VillagerPublishing.com

☎ 720-270-2018

✉ Gerri@VillagerPublishing.com

☎ 303-773-8313

✉ Bswen1@aol.com

📍 6972 S Vine St.Suite 363 Centennial, CO. 80122.

Copyright © 2024 The Villager

We use cookies on our website to give you the most relevant experience by remembering your preferences and repeat visits. By clicking "Accept", you consent to the use of ALL the cookies.

[Cookie settings](#) ACCEPT