

State of Maryland

Bond Bill Fact Sheet

1. Senate Bill #	House Bill #	2. Name of Bill
SB558	HB861	Creation of a State Debt - Montgomery County - Old Blair Auditorium Project
3. Senate Bill Sponsors		House Bill Sponsors
Ida Ruben		Delegates Hixson, Franchot, & Murray
4. Jurisdiction (County or Baltimore City)		5. Requested Amount
Montgomery County		\$1,000,000
6. Purpose of Bill		
To authorize creation of a State Debt not to exceed \$1,000,000 the proceeds to be used as a grant to the Board of Directors of the Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc. for the planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, and capital equipping of the Old Blair Auditorium, located in Silver Spring.		
7. Matching Fund Requirements		
Prior to the payment of any funds, the grantee shall provide and expend a matching fund of \$500,000. No part of the fund may consist of real property. The fund may consist of in kind contributions or funds expended prior to the effective date of this Act.		
8. Special Provisions		
None		
9. Description and Purpose of Grantee Organization		
Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc. is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Maryland (501c3 application pending with the IRS), established for the purpose of renovating, reopening, and operating this auditorium facility.		
10. Description and Purpose of Project		
To perform the renovations needed to bring the Old Blair Auditorium up to code so it can be reopened and again serve the many arts and humanities organizations and other cultural and community groups in need of an affordable facility of this size (1000-1100 seats), as well as area schools. For more information visit www.OldBlairAuditorium.org		
<i>Round all amounts to the nearest \$1,000. The totals in Items 11 (Estimated Capital Costs) and 12 (Proposed Funding Sources) must match. The proposed funding sources must not include the value of real property unless an equivalent value is shown under Estimated Capital Costs.</i>		
11. Estimated Capital Costs		
Acquisition		
Design		\$200,000
Construction		\$1,500,000
Equipment		\$300,000
	Total	\$2,000,000
12. Proposed Funding Sources – (List all funding sources and amounts.)		
	Source	Amount
	State	\$1,000,000
	Private (individual and corporate, including in-kind)	\$500,000
	County/Federal (including \$12,000 already received through Montgomery County Grants for Arts/Humanities and Recreation)	\$500,000

Name:	Anne Spielberg	Has An Appraisal Been Done?	Yes/No	
Phone:	301/587-7972		NA	
Address:		If Yes, List Appraisal Dates and Value		
24. Impact of Project on Staffing and Operating Cost at Project Site				
Current # of Employees	Projected # of Employees	Current Operating Budget	Projected Operating Budget	
0	1-2	0	\$235,000	
25. Ownership of Property (Info Requested by Treasurer's Office for bond issuance purposes)				
A. Will the grantee own or lease the property to be improved?			lease	
B. If owned, does the grantee plan to sell within 15 years?				
C. Does the grantee intend to lease any portion of the property to others?			no	
D. If property is owned by grantee and any space is to be leased, provide the following:				
Lessee	Terms of Lease	Cost Covered by Lease	Square Footage Leased	
E. If property is leased by grantee – Provide the following:				
Name of Leaser	Length of Lease	Options to Renew		
Montgomery County Public Schools/Board of Education	20 years	Yes		
26. Building Square Footage:				
Current Space GSF	20,000 (including hallways, which don't require renovation)			
Space to Be Renovated GSF	18,000			
New GSF	0			
27. Year of Construction of Any Structures Proposed for Renovation, Restoration or Conversion			1969	
28. Comments:				

The Old Blair Auditorium -- an extraordinary 1,000+ seat facility in Silver Spring -- has been boarded up for 7 years. The Auditorium was closed in June of 1998 when Montgomery Blair High School moved to its new location. The building was renovated for use as a combined middle and elementary school. Regrettably, the Auditorium was not included in the renovation.

The Old Blair Auditorium was once among the best-used facilities in Montgomery County, and hosted a wide range of activities: professional music, theater and dance performances, major fundraising events for area non-profits, and public meetings, as well as student performances, assembly programs, and other special events. It is well-equipped with a working hydraulic orchestra pit, wings and fly space with capacity for 7 backdrops/scene changes, full dressing rooms with showers, and many other features. Photos are available at www.OldBlairAuditorium.org.

Located within five blocks of the Silver Spring Central Business District, the Auditorium would directly support the town center's continued revitalization. Shuttle bus transportation would be provided from Silver Spring's CBD to the auditorium for large events. This would encourage downtown pedestrian activity, enhancing economic opportunities for the new restaurants and retail operations. The renovation, operation and maintenance of the auditorium will create jobs.

Silver Spring currently does not have a venue for large-scale music, dance & theater productions. The Old Blair Auditorium would provide a substantial boost to the proud designation of Silver Spring as Maryland's first "Arts and Entertainment District." To have no venue larger than 400-seats is a major detractor & disincentive for arts presenters, community groups, and other event planners.

There is a pronounced need in this part of Montgomery County for an auditorium with capacity of 800 or more seats. The volume of rental activity would support most of the maintenance and management costs. Premiere dance, music and theater companies and cultural groups based in Montgomery County would finally have access to affordable rehearsal and performance space. Many of these groups are forced to present their large events in D.C., resulting in a major loss of revenues for the state and county.

Among the many artists who appeared on the Old Blair Auditorium stage were Stevie Wonder, Tom Paxton, Pete Seeger, Tom Chapin, Ella Jenkins. Grammy Award-winners Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer hosted their Annual Holiday Family Concert there for nearly 15 years -- one of the most popular events for children and families in the greater D.C. area.

The arts build community, across cultural, racial, religious, economic & ethnic divides. Arts-related activities engage and inspire youth in high-impact ways, enhancing the environment for learning. With modest renovations, the Auditorium will provide urgently-needed space for area schools and communities. As it stands, there are serious health, safety and liability issues, with evidence of vandalism and rodent activity. There is no sprinkler system in the auditorium and there are breaks in the fire wall. Approximately 1,600 children and teachers occupy the adjacent areas.

This project has strong community support, including area citizen groups, arts organizations, schools, and businesses. Dedicated volunteers have devoted hundreds of hours in support of the cause. The Board of Directors of the Old Blair Auditorium Project, Inc. has recently hired professional consultants to refine the project's business plan. More than \$50,000 has been raised in very short order. A major fundraising campaign will be launched in Spring of 2005.

The enactment of this bond bill will provide the impetus for further private and public support to enable this great facility to be reopened again in service to a broad-based constituency.

