



Capital Development Committee

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION REQUEST

**Auraria Higher Education Center
Tivoli Student Union Infrastructure (Capital Renewal)**

2027-012

Project Status

This is a new, never-before-requested project.

**Table 1
Prioritization**

Prioritized By	Priority	Notes
Auraria Higher Education Center	1 of 1	
Colorado Commission on Higher Education	6 of 28	
Office of State Planning and Budgeting	26 of 47	Not recommended for funding.

**Table 2
Prior Appropriation and Request Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Future Requests	Total Costs
CCF	\$0	\$26,891,315	\$0	\$0	\$26,891,315
CF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$01
Total	\$0	\$26,891,315	\$0	\$0	\$26,891,315

**Table 3
Itemized Cost Information**

Fund Source	Prior Appropriation	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Future Requests	Total Costs
Land Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Professional Services	\$0	\$1,643,788	\$0	\$0	\$1,643,788
Construction	\$0	\$22,514,116	\$0	\$0	\$22,514,116
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$440,000	\$0	\$0	\$440,000
Contingency	\$0	\$2,293,411	\$0	\$0	\$2,293,411
Total	\$0	\$26,891,315	\$0	\$0	\$26,891,315

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Program Plan Status

Approved Program Plan: No

FCI: 11

Project Description/Scope of Work

The Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) is requesting state funds for a capital renewal project to renovate the 343,000-GSF Tivoli Student Union, which is housed in the historic Tivoli Brewing Company Building. The capital renewal approach focuses on upgrading building systems, infrastructure, and the basic building components within existing academic buildings on a building-by-building basis, rather than the project-by-project approach undertaken in the controlled maintenance process.

Tivoli Student Union serves all three AHEC constituent institutions, and the campus says the project will address 14 deferred-maintenance issues and prevent system failures that may threaten a shut-down of the facility. Issues to be addressed by the project include:

- replacing the fire alarm and fire sprinkler pipe systems;
- overhauling the elevators;
- upgrading the HVAC systems, including replacing mechanical equipment, overhauling chillers, replacing air units, and upgrading the system controls;
- replacing sanitary pipes, waste lines, and grease trap lines that serve the food court;
- replacing the electrical service and distribution switch gear;
- repairing the building exterior and envelope, including refurbishing door frames, window frames, handrails, stucco walls, intake vents, and parapet caps; repairing exterior stairs and railings; and renovating the Tivoli exterior courtyard;
- repairing or replacing roofing, skylights, and storm drains; and
- abatement where asbestos is encountered.

Cost assumption. Contractors specializing in specific building components calculated the estimates for each project that composes this capital renewal project. The project accounts for inflation at a rate of 6.0 percent to June 2026. The project is exempt from the Art in Public Places and High Performance Certification program requirements.

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Table 4
Project Schedule

Project Component	Start Date	Completion Date
Design	June 2026	December 2026
Construction	January 2027	December 2027
Occupancy	Continual occupancy throughout project	

Project Justification

AHEC says the Tivoli Building was last renovated in 1991, and the project is fundamental to maintaining safe and efficient operations in a facility that serves the entire campus. If the building's systems are not renewed, AHEC says failure could result in partial or full building closure, jeopardizing continuity of operations for all three campus institutions and impacting tens of thousands of students. The campus notes that even a short-term shutdown could impact essential counseling, food security, victim services, and other student support functions. Specific system deficiencies include:

- aging electrical equipment, much of which was installed in 1983, that presents a life-safety hazard;
- fire alarm and sprinkler systems that are past their useful life and not code-compliant, including leaking pipes, notification devices that cannot be integrated with the campus-wide system, and sprinkler heads in need of relocation;
- HVAC systems with failing controls and instruments, including use of outdated refrigerant, controls that do not integrate the campus automation system, and deteriorated hardware;
- collapsing underground piping in the sanitary drainage system used by food service, with waste grease congealing in the pipes;
- rusting structural steel framing for metal stairs and railings due to water intrusion, along with deteriorating steps;
- damage to the concrete roof deck in the Tivoli courtyard from water intrusion, resulting in water infiltrating the main electrical room directly below the courtyard;
- water intrusion in the roof and skylights; and
- deteriorated elevator cab interiors and elevator controls.

The campus says the project will eliminate the long list of deferred maintenance needs in the Tivoli Building, promote energy efficiency and system reliability, address environmental contamination issues, reduce costs associated with utilities and hard-to-find parts for antiquated systems, and reduce service calls and program disruptions.

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Program Information

AHEC, also known as Auraria Campus, spans 150 acres in downtown Denver, serving over 43,000 students, faculty, and staff. The campus is home to three academic institutions: the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Colorado Denver, each with its own governance, faculty, and mission while sharing common functions managed by AHEC, including the Tivoli Student Union. The AHEC student body is among the most diverse and representative of Colorado, with over 50 percent of students identifying as students of color, 60 percent being first-generation college students, and a growing number being non-traditional, part-time, and working students.

Constructed in 1870 as a brewery and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, the Tivoli Building serves as the student union for the campus, housing the campus bookstore, eight food vendors, a credit union, and shared office and meeting spaces used by students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The building also offers critical student services, lounges, study areas, event spaces, mental health resources, cultural engagement, and co-curricular learning.

Operating Budget

Operating costs are paid from institutional sources. AHEC expects the project to result in reduced operating costs due to reduced utility and maintenance costs. AHEC also expects any increase in workload associated with the improvements to be offset by reduced workloads from keeping aging equipment running.

Staff Questions and Issues

1. Why is AHEC, or its constituent institutions, unable to provide a cash match for the project?

AHEC is exempt from the cash match scoring criteria. This was based on the fact that AHEC has no alumni or student tuition revenue. Our revenue is generated from our parking/auxiliary operations and the appropriations we receive from the three institutions. This appropriation does not fully cover our operating expenses and is backfilled from parking revenue. Essentially, we would have to take money from other critical operating areas to contribute a cash match for projects. As this CR request is phase one of a several phase project, AHEC is seeking several sources of funds for the overall project to maximize the return to students, faculty, and staff, while minimizing the financial burden on any one source of funds. This approach is consistent with other projects we have submitted over the past few years since the scoring criteria was adjusted to create the cash match exempt category.