



**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, February 29, 2024**  
**Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm**

*Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 and Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023; Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the February 29, 2024 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.*

**Committee Members Present:** Elise Russo, Chair; Dan McGuiggin, Vice-Chair; Missy Seidel; Patrice Metro; Marc DiCosimo; Jamie Gilmore; Jerry Kelly and Lynda Ferguson

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**

Conor Doherty

**Also in Attendance:** Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Director; William Burkhead, School Superintendent; Thomas Raab, Director of School Business & Finance; Donald Walter, Dore & Whittier Architects; Jon Lemieux, Vertex Companies (OPM)

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Mr. Gilmore and voted unanimously in favor (7-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Seidel-yes; Ms. Russo-yes; Mr. Gilmore-yes; Ms. Metro-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; Mr. DiCosimo-yes; and Mr. McGuiggin-yes.**

**Ms. Metro made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 15, 2024 meeting which was seconded by Mr. Gilmore. The minutes were voted majority in favor (5-0-2) by roll call vote; Ms. Seidel-abstain; Ms. Russo-yes; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Metro-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; Mr. DiCosimo-yes and Mr. McGuiggin-abstain.**

*Ms. Ferguson joined the meeting.*

*Proposed Cushing Hatherly School Building Project - William Burkhead, School Superintendent (presentation to be appended to minutes)*

Mr. Burkhead introduced the team including the architect, Donald Walter of Dore & Whittier and the OPM, Jon Lemieux of Vertex Companies. Mr. Burkhead provided a brief history of the

project and a high level introduction prior to starting the presentation. He noted that Scituate is now at the Project Scope and Budget phase of the project with the MSBA. He noted that even with repairs, Cushing and Hatherly Schools do not meet the educational needs of the district. Although the cost of repair was estimated to be \$62MM before cost escalation to present day dollars, and thereby less costly than a new build, the estimated time frame would be considerably longer and therefore subject to cost increases. It was stated that MSBA support was much more probable for a new school. He went on to discuss the visioning activities and the stakeholders including students, teachers, staff and community members which would be attained with a new facility vs repairs. The useful life of the new building was reported to be 60 years by Mr. Burkhead.

Ms. Russo asked about the future of the Cushing School property if the project was approved. Mr. Burkhead responded that the Select Board recommended it be demolished and used for future recreation/field use. Mr. Burkhead said the \$2M for the work was built into the project. Mr. Gilmore asked for a definition of the “old, tired and dilapidated” nature of the buildings. Mr. Burkhead directed the members to the website to see pictures of the sites and offered tours of the two facilities to members. Mr. Kelly expounded on the comprehensiveness of the process.

Mr. Raab launched the presentation with Mr. Lemieux (OPM) narrating. He noted that construction would start in 2025 and the new proposed school would open in September 2027. He reviewed the project schedule with key dates for MSBA submissions and town actions as well as the outreach that would be continuing in community meetings. Mr. Walter reviewed the design process to date with 23 options, including renovation, renovation/addition and new school. Ms. Metro asked about the five year delay for a repair project, the increased cost and the impact to students. Mr. Walter responded that there would be off hour work, evening and week-ends, need for use of modular and relocation of students from place to place which will all lead to increased costs. Ms. Metro asked about the specific cost estimate for the repair project and Mr. Walter indicated that not all the costs, eg moving the children around, were estimated. Ms. Russo noted that the schools operated remotely during COVID and asked if that might that be an appropriate way of relieving costs for a period of time. Mr. Gilmore commented that the Commonwealth might not allow it and Mr. Burkhead expressed concerns for authorization as well the overall impact to students.

Mr. Walter continued his presentation showing a site plan with traffic patterns noting that 70 cars can queue off Ann Vinal Road. He also highlighted the community school aspects including age appropriate playgrounds, Flannery field, a walking path around the perimeter of the site and access to conservation land. He noted the most cost effective manner to approach the project was to build the school in a single phase which influenced where it could be sited and it would be about an 18 month cycle. Ms. Ferguson asked the location of playgrounds in the proposed new school. Mr. Walter responded there are multiple play areas that are age specific as well as the courtyards and Flannery field. Ms. Ferguson asked about snow removal in the courtyards. Mr. Walter responded that the courtyards are hard surface and the snow could be pushed to the side and it had drainage that would go into the stormwater systems. Ms. Ferguson was concerned if it would be DPW or school custodians who would be responsible for the snow removal.

Mr. Burkhead reviewed the part of the presentation relevant to the capacity and enrollment. He

noted that the question had been raised if all of the Hatherly students could be moved to other schools during construction to save costs and it was determined that there is insufficient capacity on the other three schools. Mr. Raab stated that there are currently 618 students in Cushing and Hatherly Schools but the new school only for 460 students. He explained that the MSBA looks at all the schools in the district and determined that there was space in other schools to accommodate the difference. Mr. Raab said more than 460 students could be in the school if class sizes were adjusted. He stated that the district was committed to working with families on redistricting. Mr. Raab noted the option to move the students out resulted in minimal cost savings and it did not really shorten the construction period significantly.

Mr. DiCosimo asked about the plan for Wampatuck School and the potential for more students with recent building. Mr. Burkhead responded that \$6.5M was spent in the last four years on the other schools, especially Wampatuck including a new portico, parking lot, floors, library, electrical and this year accessible bathrooms are in the capital plan. Mr. Raab noted that Wampatuck had renovations about 15 years ago and the district would be further improved. Relevant to capacity, Mr. Raab stated that the pre-school program would move out of Wampatuck to the new Cushing Hatherly which would free up space and also that the enrollment projections were fairly flat. Ms. Russo noted the disconnect between the perceived enrollment and the MSBA projections. Mr. Raab stated that enrollment dropped during COVID but now it is beginning to come back up to the previous level.

Ms. Metro asked about the concern of breaking up families and Mr. Burkhead responded it was related to the option to move all the students out of Hatherly School to other locations. He gave the example of a family with two children in different grades; that if there was space for a kindergartener at Wampatuck but not third grade and Jenkins had space for third grade but not kindergarten. Mr. Walter stated that each of the six grades has four classrooms so the addition one student per classroom allows an additional 24 students. Ms. Ferguson noted that she was involved in a past redistricting process and there were projections of increased enrollment due to new homes being built and it did not materialize for a variety of reasons. Mr. DiCosimo asked about the life expectancy of the Wampatuck School and Mr. Raab responded 30 years. Mr. DiCosimo asked if there had been any studies of the enrollment trends going forward. Mr. Burkhead stated they had a preliminary demographic study done a couple of years and it was level and they would do another more comprehensive one. Mr. Walter stated the MSBA has their own demographic study for Scituate which looks 10 years into the future.

Mr. Walter continued through various views of the site and the proposed building. Mr. Gilmore asked about the energy efficiency and environmental impact of the project. Mr. Walter stated the building would be LEED Silver, outside air circulation, lots of natural light and a solar array on the roof.

Mr. Lemieux reviewed the project budget and detailed what was in each sub-grouping. He noted the construction contingency was 5% and the owner's contingency was an additional 2%. He stated that the MSBA base reimbursement rate was 43% of eligible costs and that was the rate Scituate received for the feasibility study. He informed members that the MSBA also imposes spending caps such as \$605/square foot for building costs despite the reality of \$800+ per square foot. He updated members that the 43% had dropped to 42.37% plus 1.35% for the maintenance

plan and 4% for environmental incentives for the opt-in energy code which equals an estimated reimbursement rate of 47.72% which has to be confirmed by the MSBA in the coming weeks. The net reimbursement is about 31% with a town share of \$82,290,830 (\$83,390,830 less the previously funded feasibility study).

Ms. Russo asked about the certainty of the \$119M project cost and if there was the potential for an inflationary increase by the time the funding was obtained. Mr. Lemieux stated that there will be at least two more cost estimations between this stage and the final bid documents at which time changes can be made to stay within budget. He noted not only is there a promise to the citizens but the MSBA is also committed only to that budget amount and they have a vested interest to make sure the Town stays within budget. He also stated the estimators are aiming for the middle of the pack of bids to be received rather than trying to hit the exact amount as there is no flexibility. He stated bid alternates could be used to control costs as well including finishes.

Mr. McGuiggin asked if the community must abide by the MSBA's guidelines for enrollment. Mr. Lemieux said at the end of the day it is up to the community. He stated that when the Town signs the project scope and funding agreement, Scituate is locked in to the budget. Mr. McGuiggin asked about the strings attached to the project from the MSBA. Mr. Lemieux pointed out that the MSBA will hold 5% of the grant back until after the building is built and the community has demonstrated that the building is performing as intended for energy efficiency, commissioning and air quality. Ms. Seidel asked if Scituate will be required to do additional work because we are partnering with the MSBA rather than self-funding the project. Mr. Lemieux said you could move faster without the MSBA so there might be some savings on construction costs but not enough to offset the grant amount. Mr. Walter stated that most spaces are prescriptive but the special education spaces are specific to each community. He stated there really is not anything being required from an educational process that the community would have done anyways. Mr. Lemieux stated the number of ineligible spaces and square footage is very small by design. Ms. Russo asked the current cost per square foot and Mr. Lemieux responded \$894/SF but it would only be \$868/SF without the demolition of Cushing School as it is ineligible for reimbursement. Ms. Russo asked the amount for the demolition and Mr. Lemieux responded \$2.8M.

Ms. Holt reviewed the debt exclusions. The tax impact on the average valued home in Scituate (\$921,206) would be \$859 in the first year, with \$15,879 over the 25 year life of the anticipated funding. Ms. Russo asked about the impact of the South Shore Vocational Technical School project and Ms. Holt said there was not any credible information at this time as there are at least nine towns that have to make that decision.

Mr. Lemieux reviewed the path forward if there is an approval of the project at town meeting and the ballot or if there is a disapproval of the project at either. Mr. Lemieux reviewed the project timeline to date and the lead time if the community had to re-start the process if the project was not supported. The estimate was at least another five years in delays and the cost would be in the \$153M with 5% escalation. He also reviewed the historical cost per square foot of construction for all school types as tracked by the MSBA from 2014 (\$331) through 2025 estimates (\$790).

Mr. DiCosimo asked if there was a limit on the number of projects that a community can submit to the MSBA. Mr. Lemieux stated that he was not aware of a prohibition but he has never worked with a community that had two schools at the same time. Mr. Walter stated that historically the MSBA would not entertain a Statement of Interest until the current project is closed out. Mr. Lemieux also stated that if a large school comes into the pipeline such as Brockton High School, it takes up a significant amount of available funds which affects other applicants. Mr. Kelly stated that Gates Middle School is still open with the MSBA when the Hatherly School was invited into the program.

Mr. Burkhead reviewed the upcoming dates for public meetings, the MSBA board meeting, special town meeting and the town election.

*Other Business*

Ms. Russo stated that the deadline for write-ups was coming soon and asked if members want to assign articles. Mr. Gilmore asked the date of the votes and Ms. Russo confirmed it will be March 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Ferguson confirmed the meeting is in person. Ms. Holt reminded members that the next meeting would be in person on March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Community Room in the Library at 7 PM. The public hearing with the Select Board on the budget will be at 6:00 PM by ZOOM on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Mr. DiCosimo left the meeting.*

Ms. Metro expressed concern about the cost of the new school and how it will be received by the citizens. Mr. Gilmore noted that the town is trying to overcome 50 years of deferred issues. Ms. Ferguson noted that it may pass at town meeting due to the attendance but it will be more difficult. Ms. Russo stated it was a concern that the cost had not been reduced to the eligible cost amount of \$605/square foot and that the budgeted per square foot amount for this project at \$868 is higher than the average cost estimates provided by the MSBA for 2025 of \$790. and Mr. Kelly responded there are other ineligible costs. Members discussed concerns of the cost in addition to taxpayer impacts from other projects not currently developed but that are likely coming in the near term, such as the South Shore Vocational Technical School new building, the potential for sewer work to connect North Scituate, and the potential for a needed operational override ~~and~~ ~~needs~~ and the impact on residents.

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Gilmore at 9:48 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (7-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Seidel-yes; Ms. Russo-yes; Mr. Gilmore-yes, Ms. Metro-yes; Ms. Ferguson-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes and Mr. McGuiggin-yes.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt  
Recorder

Scituate Public Schools



# Cushing - Hatherly Elementary School Project

Project Update

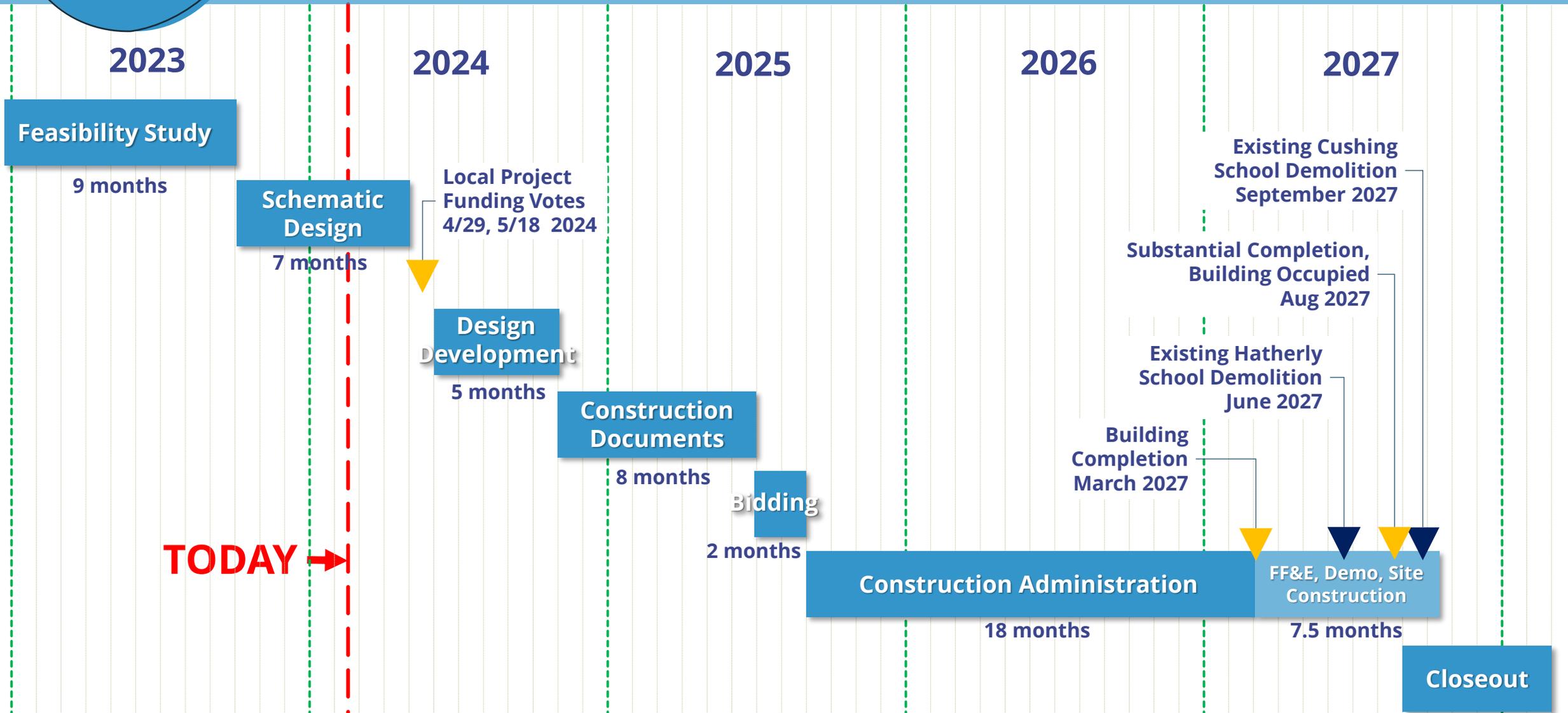
February 2024

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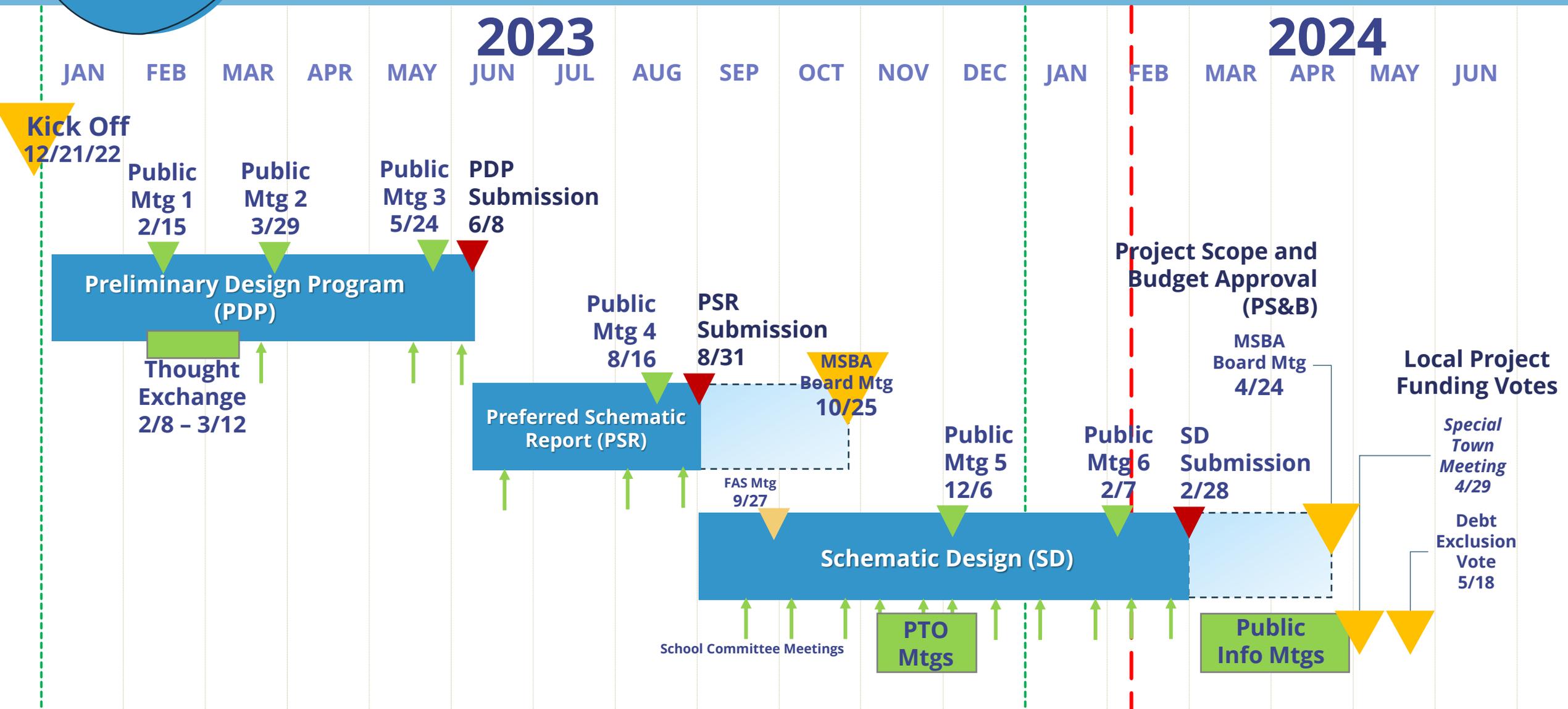


# Overall Project Schedule



Scituate  
Cushing -  
Hatherly  
Elementary  
School

# Feasibility Study– Schematic Design Updated Schedule



# The Costs of Repair-Only

\$62.0M repair-only costs for **Cushing + Hatherly**

- Phased project necessary = ~ 6 year duration
- Construction cost escalation likely
- Modular swing space required
- Multiple student moves
- Does not meet educational program goals
- MSBA reimbursement unlikely

- *Schedule:*

*New Build Project Completion  
Fall 2027*

*- versus -*

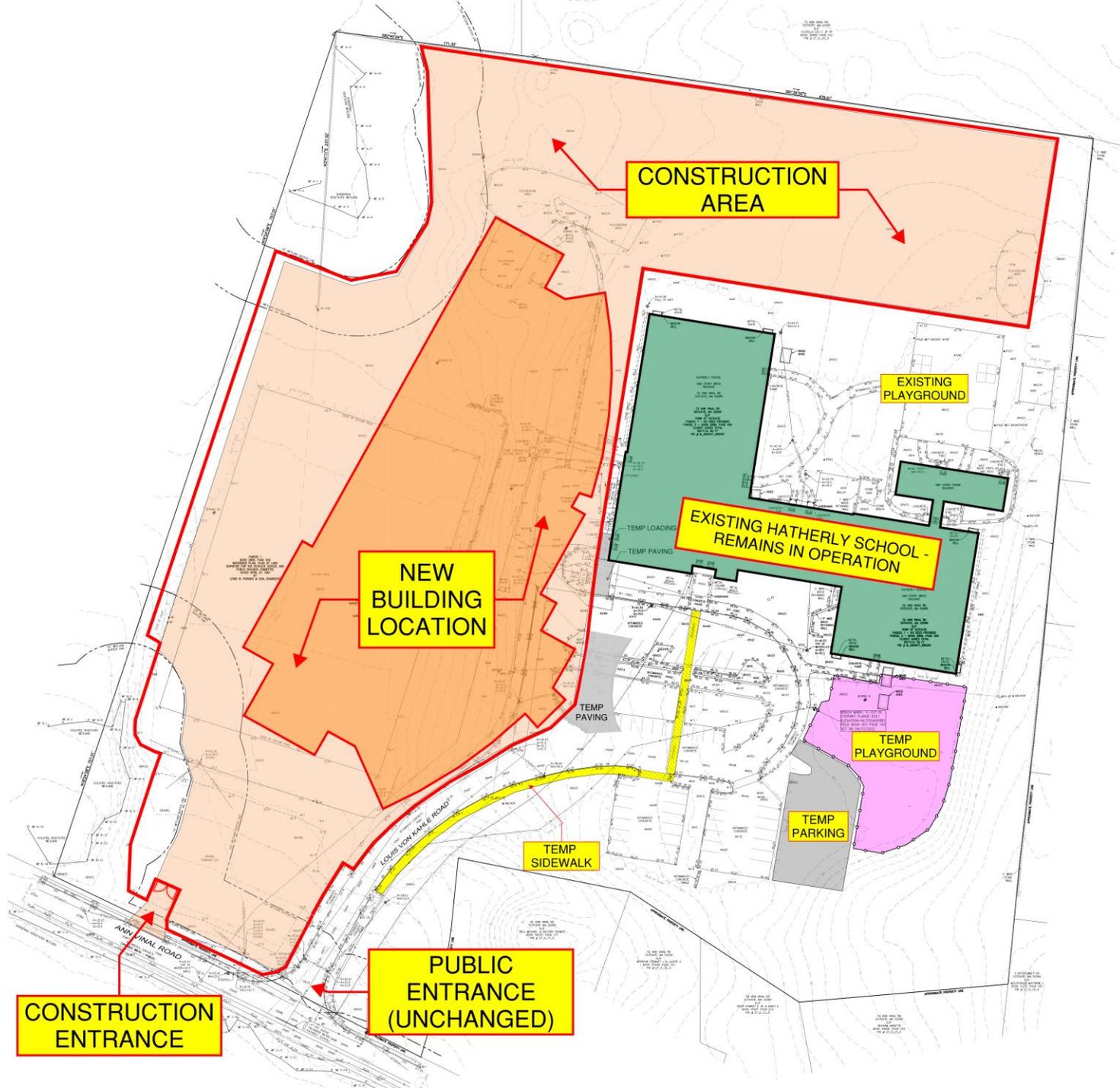
*Repair Project Completion  
~Fall 2032*

- *Highly disruptive to student learning*
- *No educational or space improvements*
- *Diverts maintenance funding from other buildings*



# LANDSCAPE CONCEPT SITE PLAN

# SITE CONSTRUCTION PLAN



- Allows school to remain open, avoiding internal renovations or disruptive relocation, temporary modular trailers
- Avoids wetlands
- Construction and public traffic separated
- New temporary sidewalk keeps kids away from fence
- Temp facilities provided to replace those lost in the back
- Access and egress maintained on west side of existing building



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# Student Capacity Update



February 1, 2024

# MSBA Formula

As a part of the MSBA process, all elementary spaces were evaluated to determine the space available to be used in our current buildings which was used to formulate the space and enrollment capacity of the new building.

- **Total students 618**
  - Cushing Elementary School 368 students
  - Hatherly Elementary School 250 students
- **Based on the space available in other elementary schools, what is the capacity for the new building project & how many students will need to be dispersed among other elementary schools?**
  - 460 students is the capacity of the new building project
  - $618 - 460 = 158$  students will need to be dispersed to current available spaces
- **Can we move all of Hatherly to other spaces currently available?**
  - No.  $250$  Hatherly students –  $158$  available student spaces = 92 students over capacity
  - No. Moving students to all available spaces will potentially break up families depending on grade level.
  - No. Hatherly has special education programs that have specific requirements to support student services.



Aerial view from East



Main Entrance view from Playground



# Cafeteria and North Courtyard



**Classroom view to Extended Learning Area**

# Project Budget



# Project Budget Detail

Preferred Schematic (PSR)	Amount
Construction Budget	\$ 92,400,000
Soft Costs at 30% of Construction	\$ 27,720,000
<b>Total Project Budget (PSR)</b>	<b>\$ 120,120,000</b>
Less anticipated grant (28%)	\$ (33,633,600)
<b>Town Share</b>	<b>\$ 86,486,400</b>

Schematic Design (SD)	Amount
Construction Budget	\$ 94,922,834
Feasibility Study Agreement	\$ 1,100,000
Administration (OPM)	\$ 3,573,511
Architectural / Engineering	\$ 10,130,000
Miscellaneous Project Costs	\$ 1,160,000
FF&E and Technology	\$ 1,904,000
Construction Contingency	\$ 4,746,142
Owner's Contingency	\$ 1,898,457
<b>Total Project Budget (SD)</b>	<b>\$ 119,434,943</b>
Less anticipated grant (31%)	\$ (36,044,113)
<b>Town Share</b>	<b>\$ 83,390,830</b>

Differences from PSR to SD:

- Construction Budget now includes the Cushing abatement, demo and site restoration (\$2.8M)
- Budget includes Ann Vinal Road force main work (\$360K for construction; \$75K for design)
- Soft costs decreased from 30% to 22% of Construction

# CUSHING HATHERLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL *AT A GLANCE*

The new consolidated Cushing Hatherly Elementary School is being presented to voters as a debt exclusion. A debt exclusion requires a 2/3rds vote of town meeting and a majority vote at the ballot. A debt exclusion is a TEMPORARY tax increase to pay for the costs of a project. The temporary tax increase declines over the repayment period and completely goes away once the debt is fully repaid.

<b>Total Project Cost to be voted upon by voters</b>	\$119,434,943
<b>Estimated Taxpayer Share Net of Estimated Massachusetts School Building Authority Reimbursement and Previously Funded Feasibility Study</b>	\$82,290,830
<b>Estimated Taxpayer Impact on \$921,206 Home – 1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	\$859
<b>Estimated Taxpayer Impact on \$921,206 Home - 25<sup>th</sup> Year</b>	\$413
<b>Estimated Total Taxpayer Impact Over 25 Year Period</b>	\$15,879

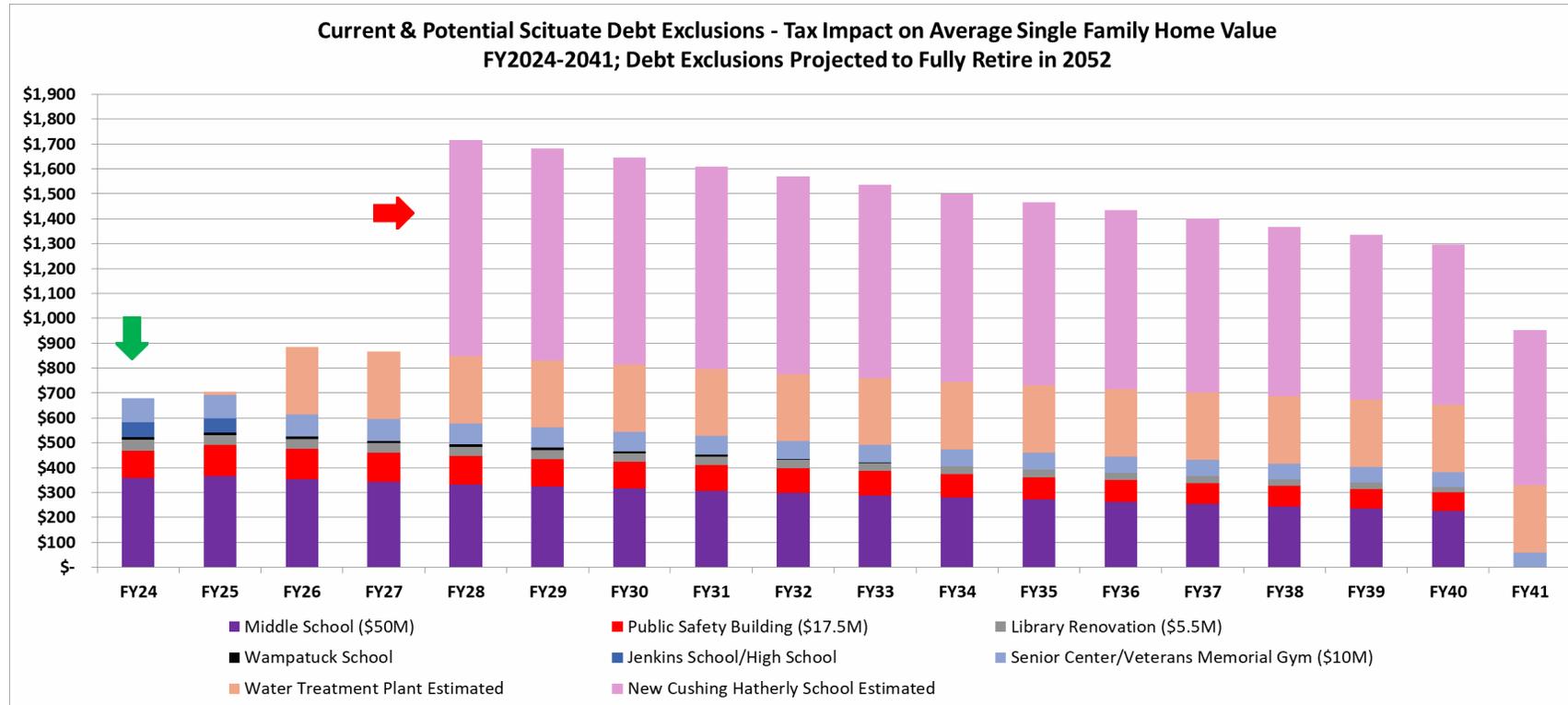
(1) Please note these are estimates and subject to change. The average assessed home value in Scituate is currently \$921,206 and changes annually.

(2) Project cost estimates based on a 25 year bond.

(3) The Town's financial advisor has recommended we assume a **conservative** 4.75% interest rate.

# Estimated Taxpayer Impacts of All Debt Exclusions

FY24-33 (All Debt Exclusions Are Fully Paid by FY 2041 Except for Water Treatment Plant and Potential Cushing Hatherly Elementary School Which Would Be Projected to be Completely Paid by FY 2052)



- ➡ (1) Pink bars indicate the consolidated Cushing Hatherly School project. The worst impact will be the first year and then the debt service will decline as the principal is paid down. Impact based on the average assessed value home of \$921,206 and an assumed 4.75% interest rate. Impact is shown net of estimated Massachusetts School Building Authority reimbursement and would be further reduced by any other grants, donations or other available funds applied to the project prior to the final bond issuance.
- ➡ (2) Current year is FY24 which ends June 30, 2024. First year project debt anticipated to be reflected in real estate tax bills is FY28 (starts July 1, 2027).

Data provided as of February 6, 2024 for informational purposes only.

## What a **YES** vote at Town Meeting and the Ballot means to the project:

- The Town executes a Project Funding Agreement with the MSBA for the proposed grant amount, for the approved Project Scope and Budget
- Project Design continues through Bidding of the project in the summer of 2025
- Construction commences in the summer / fall of 2025
- The new Cushing/Hatherly School is open for students in September of 2027

## What a **NO** vote at Town Meeting or the Ballot means to the project:

- The Town does not proceed further in the MSBA process as the approved Project Scope and Budget was not supported by its residents
- The funds expended thus far (over \$1M before reimbursement) are gone and would need to be spent again if the district were to pursue another MSBA grant
- The Town must submit a new Statement of Interest for future consideration by MSBA. Scituate would likely be a lower priority than other towns due to the failed vote.
- Cushing and Hatherly deferred capital needs will take precedence over other school capital projects for the foreseeable future **at an estimated current repair cost of \$30M for each school in today's dollars**
- The rejected solution will continue to grow in cost at approximately 5% per year
- Real facility-driven educational needs in Hatherly and Cushing Schools will continue to be unmet



# Cushing Hatherly Elementary School

## Project Timeline

Milestone	Date	Months from Prior Milestone
Statement of Interest (SOI) submitted	05/06/2020	-
Invited to Eligibility	04/21/2021	11
Invited to Feasibility	03/22/2022	11
OPM on board (approximate)	07/2022	4
Designer on board (approximate)	01/2023	6
Schematic Design (SD) submission	02/28/2024	14
<b>Total time SOI to SD</b>		<b>46 months</b>

- The current SOI deadline is April 12, 2024, so any new SOI would be 12 additional months after that (because the deadline would be missed).
- Assuming another MSBA invitation, it would therefore take five (5) years to get back to this same place.
- The current \$120.1M project in 2024 would be \$153.3M in 2029 at 5% escalation per year.

# Average Cost per Square Foot per Year from MSBA Website

Year	\$/SF (avg)	Increase (%)	Data Type
2014	\$331	5.8%	Bid
2015	\$374	13.0%	Bid
2016	\$359	-4.0%	Bid
2017	\$401	11.7%	Bid
2018	\$420	4.7%	Bid
2019	\$428	1.9%	Bid
2020	\$478	11.7%	Bid
2021	\$509	6.5%	Bid
2022	\$604	18.7%	Bid
2023	\$654	8.3%	Bid
2024	\$717	9.6%	SD
2025	\$790	10.2%	SD

- SD cost data are estimates, meant to be the “middle of the pack”
- Cost data is for all project types – Elementary, Middle, and High Schools – in all locations.

# Next Steps:

- February 28 – Submit Schematic Design package to the MSBA
- March 6 - Public Forum #7 – Town Library
- March 21 - Public Forum #8 – Cushing E.S.
- April 2 - Public Forum #9 – Senior Center
- April 24 – MSBA Board Meeting
- April 29 – Special Town Meeting Vote
- May 18 – Debt Exclusion Town Vote





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Thank You.

