

**Wayland High School
Modernization & Expansion Project**

FACT SHEET

Fall 2003

Prepared by the Wayland School Committee

Background In a long-range planning initiative that began in 1996 and led to the expansion of Wayland elementary and middle schools, the Wayland School Committee is now addressing current and future space, maintenance and educational requirements for Wayland High School (WHS).

The Need ***Facility Age***—WHS was opened in 1960 and last renovated in 1992. The building now has significant needs, including code compliance for sprinklers and septic systems; internal structural modifications to enlarge certain classrooms; handicap accessibility and modernization for areas and building systems not updated in 1992. Technology infrastructure is inadequate for computer and Internet access needs. The size and layout of science and other classrooms are not suited for current educational norms including requirements for instrumentation, teaching techniques, equipment and hazardous waste disposal.

Enrollment Growth—Enrollment will have grown 18% between 2002 and 2007 to approximately 1,000 students and is projected at 1,000 to 1,100 students through 2020. Current WHS enrollment is 882 and conditions are already crowded.

Changed Educational Standards—Building utilization has changed considerably in 40 years due to more rigorous college requirements, the introduction of computers, special education, Americans with Disabilities Act, equal athletics for girls and greater performing arts participation. These changes have resulted in the loss of 25-35% of the classroom space used in the 1970s when enrollment was nearly 1,300. In addition:

- Colleges require more science; 93% of students now take four years of science compared with 60-70% in the 1980s
- Special education programs now serve 17% of WHS (versus 20% statewide)
- There are now 45 sports teams compared with 15 in 1965
- The orchestra has 85 students compared with 25 in 1970

**Recommended
Improvements**

A comprehensive review and analysis of WHS capacity, educational requirements and projected costs—benchmarked against schools in surrounding communities—was made by a team of nearly 70 citizens with expertise in education, demographics, construction, public finance and other relevant fields (the Wayland High School Study Committee).

Among their recommendations:

- Prepare WHS for optimum operation at 1,100 students, configurable to accommodate peaks of 1,200 to 1,300
- Add and reconfigure classrooms for increased flexibility
- Upgrade and add science and technology labs
- Renovate the field house and expand athletic facilities
- Expand the performing arts space
- Expand common space, including the cafeteria, and add conference rooms, offices, storage and study areas
- Consider accommodating other community needs and potential revenue opportunities from outside groups

- Commission a detailed conceptual design and implementation plan to determine the optimum, most cost-effective and least disruptive way to expand and modernize the school
- Determine whether the best solution entails building a new structure, renovating the existing one or a combination thereof

Financing

The next step, preparation of a conceptual design and implementation plan, will be financed by borrowing \$355,000 over five years. The plan will include a detailed, more precise cost estimate for the full project. For the median Wayland residential taxpayer, the estimated cost is \$10 annually for five years.

With a detailed design and cost estimate in hand, voters will then be asked to approve the full project no earlier than the fall of 2004. Rough construction estimates range from \$30–40 million. The School Committee proposes seeking state approval to extend the permissible loan period from 20 to 30 years. If this is done, the estimated cost of a \$30-40 million project for the median Wayland residential property taxpayer is \$108-145 annually for years 1 – 7 and \$320-426 annually for the remainder of the loan period. After taking into account debt from other civic projects that will be retiring, the net estimated cost is \$113-220 per year.

The state co-funding program (the School Building Assistance Program) that subsidized the middle school enlargement has been cut and will not be reinstated in the foreseeable future. Given current interest rates and falling construction costs, the School Committee believes this is a reasonable time to pursue this project.

Next Steps

Special Town Meeting Vote - Three warrant articles have been submitted for consideration at the November 20, 2003 Special Town Meeting requesting:

- An appropriation of \$355,000 to fund the conceptual design and implementation plan
- Authorization for the School Committee to establish an 11-member High School Building Committee
- Authorization for the Wayland Board of Selectmen to petition the state legislature to extend the debt payment period for the project from 20 to 30 years

A two-thirds majority of votes at the Special Town Meeting is required for the appropriation to pass.

Future Vote - If the first two of these articles are passed, the full project, as determined by the conceptual design and implementation plan, will be put to a future vote.

More Information

Open Forums and WHS Tours—Forums and school tours open to all Wayland residents are being held October 18 from 10 am – noon at the High School Little Theater, October 23 from 7 – 9 pm at the High School Little Theater, October 28 from 9 – 11 am at the Middle School Cafeteria, October 29 from 7 – 9 pm at the High School Little Theater and November 10 from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm at the High School Commons.

High School Study Committee Report—Full reports, School Committee presentations, minutes from meetings and intra-committee e-mail communications on the project are available at www.waylandschoolcommittee.org. Reports and presentations are at the Wayland Public Library.