



South Windsor Board of Education

Community Update – February 2014

Elementary Schools Master Plan: Phase One

To Town of South Windsor Residents and Families:

Last month, you received information about the Elementary Facilities Master Plan that the Board adopted in October 2013. Our first mailing provided an overview of our plan, which calls for a ten-year, phased approach for addressing our aging elementary school buildings, which range in age from 48 to 60 years old. If you wish to reference the first mailing, or any of the supporting materials or meeting videos, including our presentation to the Town Council, please visit our website or simply Google "South Windsor Elementary Facilities Master Plan."

Our master plan starts with Phase One, which is described in more detail on the next page. As promised in our first mailing, the Board has created this second mailing to provide you with more information concerning Phase One, including finalized construction cost estimates, tax impact details, and information about reimbursement from the State of Connecticut.

The Board has now received a finalized cost estimate based on the completion of the Educational Specifications for the new elementary school, which were approved by the Board on December 10th. The finalized cost estimate also reflects the recent report from the State's School Safety Infrastructure Council for new regulations concerning school safety construction requirements. The details of this finalized cost estimate, and the tax implications of Phase One, are also described in more detail on the next page.

As I write this letter, we expect that the Town Council will set Tuesday, March 25th as the date for a public referendum to request voter authorization to borrow the necessary funding for this school construction.

Your Board of Education is united in our determination of the need for this work, and we are confident that our plan is well-reasoned, responsible, responsive to community input, and simply makes sense for South Windsor's children, families and taxpayers.

Recently I listened to a community leader talk about the vision and commitment that an earlier generation of South Windsor voters and taxpayers showed when they approved the construction of our current elementary schools between 1953 and 1965.

We now have a well-timed opportunity to make our generation's lasting statement about the importance of our school system, including facilities that provide better learning environments, comply with all current codes, meet new safety expectations, have modern mechanical systems, and are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

I urge you to carefully consider the rest of the information in this mailing, and would then ask for your support of the master plan. Please show your support by voting in favor of the Phase One portion of our plan when it comes to referendum this March. Together, we can make a difference.

David S. Joy, Chairman
South Windsor Board of Education

Overview of Phase One

Phase One of the Master Plan calls for the construction of a 71,040 square foot PreK—5 elementary school to be built on the Orchard Hill campus. If the March referendum is approved, construction would begin in the summer of 2015 and be completed in the winter of 2017. Once the new school is open, the original Orchard Hill building will serve as “swing space” for use by other school populations while their schools are under construction in Phases Two and Three of the plan. In addition, Wapping School will be turned over to the town for other community use in the fall of 2017. Wapping School students will be redistricted to one of three other elementary schools.

Cost of New School

The final cost estimate for the new school is \$33,521,724; of that \$32,516,072 is expected to be eligible for state reimbursement. The current state reimbursement rate for new school construction in South Windsor is 34.64%. After applying this reimbursement rate, the cost of the project to South Windsor taxpayers is \$22,258,157. It should be noted that the overall project cost is slightly higher than preliminary estimates due to the recent release of anticipated new state mandates associated with school security features to be included in all Connecticut school construction projects. This report of the School Safety Infrastructure Council was released in January 2014. We have now factored in the cost of these security features which are reflected in the final cost estimate. Essentially the new mandates resulted in increasing the total project cost by 3.28%.

Incremental Tax Impact of Phase One Based on Home Values

Prepared by South Windsor Town Manager, Matthew Galligan

Home Market Value	Taxable Assessment	2016	2017	2019	2020	Total Cost - 4 Years
\$200,000	\$149,000	\$5.96	\$8.94	\$8.94	\$13.41	\$37.25
\$250,000	\$175,000	\$7.00	\$10.50	\$10.50	\$15.75	\$43.75
\$300,000	\$210,000	\$8.40	\$12.60	\$12.60	\$18.90	\$52.50
\$350,000	\$245,000	\$9.80	\$14.70	\$14.70	\$22.05	\$61.25
\$400,000	\$280,000	\$11.20	\$16.80	\$16.80	\$25.20	\$70.00
\$450,000	\$315,000	\$12.60	\$18.90	\$18.90	\$28.35	\$78.75
\$500,000	\$350,000	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$31.50	\$87.50
Mill Rate Increase:		.04	.06	.06	.09	

Note: There are only four years of the 20-year term that will increase the mill rate. The remaining 16 years of new debt is absorbed by the retiring of old debt.

The preceding tax increase table was prepared by South Windsor Town Manager, Matthew Galligan. As this table illustrates, the incremental cost to the taxpayer for Phase One construction is minimal. Because of South Windsor’s ongoing retirement of existing bonded debt, there will be only four years within the 20-year term of the bond (2016, 2017, 2019 and 2020) where the new debt service of Phase One will exceed the amount of existing debt service for old debt that will be retired. In other words, the Phase One construction will cause the mill rate to increase only in the four years noted, and even then the increases are very modest. For example, a taxpayer with a home valued at \$300,000 will see an overall tax increase of \$8.40 in 2016, \$12.60 in 2017, \$12.60 in 2019, and \$18.90 in 2020. In the other sixteen years of the 20 year bond, there is no incremental increase to taxes as the required debt service is absorbed by the retirement of old debt. Please note that these figures only represent the impact on taxes associated with Phase One school construction debt. It does not reflect other potential sources of future debt.

Highlights from Survey

Thank you to the 493 residents who responded to the survey that accompanied the first mailing. We learned that 85% of respondents believe there is a correlation between property values and the quality of our schools, and 87% of respondents plan to cast a vote in the March referendum. The survey results, coupled with feedback we are hearing directly from residents, confirms that our efforts to provide the South Windsor community with clear and concise information have been effective. We were pleased to learn that only 13% of respondents felt they did not have enough information to make an informed decision. Most of these respondents indicated that the only remaining information needed was data regarding tax implications, which was already planned to be addressed in this second mailing. We are hopeful that in response to this second mailing, residents will now feel they have access to the information they need to make an informed decision. Finally, 35% of respondents indicated they would be interested in a tour of an elementary school. In response to your feedback, please see the information below regarding school tours.

Opportunities for an Elementary School Tour

We have selected Philip R. Smith Elementary School (949 Avery Street) to serve as a representative facility of our elementary schools. The purpose of the tour is to provide residents who may be unfamiliar with our elementary facilities an opportunity to better understand the conditions of our aging elementary schools across the district. Director of Facilities, Patrick Hankard, will lead these tours. Interested residents may join us for a tour during any one of the following four opportunities:

	<u>Start Times:</u>		
Saturday, February 15, 2014	10:00 a.m.	and	11:30 a.m.
Monday, February 17, 2014	4:30 p.m.	and	6:30 p.m.

Phase One Timeline At a Glance

The following dates represent a forecasted timeline for Phase One of the Elementary Facilities Master Plan. Dates are subject to change:

- **October 2013** South Windsor Board of Education approves Elementary Facilities Ten-Year Master Plan
- **December 2013** South Windsor Board of Education approves Educational Specifications
- **January 2014** Town-wide mailing to provide all residents with an overview of the Master Plan
- **February 2014** Second mailing to provide final Phase One construction cost estimates & tax implications
- **February 2014** Town Council anticipated to set Referendum date for March 25, 2014
- **March 2014** Town Referendum to approve Phase One of the Plan
- **June 2014** File ED 049 Grant Application with State of Connecticut
- **June 2015** Grant approval by State of Connecticut
- **August 2015** Construction begins on new Orchard Hill School
- **September 2015** Orchard Hill School students remain in original Orchard Hill School
Wapping School students remain in original Wapping School
- **September 2016** Orchard Hill School students remain in original Orchard Hill School
Wapping School students remain in original Wapping School
- **September 2017** New Orchard Hill School opens for students
Eli Terry's Pre-K Program moves to new Orchard Hill School
Wapping School students redistricted among Orchard Hill, Pleasant Valley and Philip R. Smith schools
Wapping School turned over to Town of South Windsor



South Windsor Board of Education

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WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.southwindsorschools.org/elementaryfacilities

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