

UXBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL NARRATIVE

Part III - THE RECOMMENDATION AND COST

This is the third and final part of three articles about the high school project. This article focuses on the cost and tax implications associated with the School Building Committee's recommended solution.

Costs and Tax Implications:

The Finance Committee has asked a series of questions about the proposed high school project. The answers to the questions asked by the Finance Committee provide a good foundation for understanding the scope, cost and tax implications of the project.

Finance Committee Questions:

1. What is the cost of the project?

- a. Total \$43,050,000
- b. Town ~\$20,000,000

On March 31 the MSBA Board of Directors voted to approve Uxbridge "to proceed into the schematic design for the construction of a new, 123,000 square-foot facility to replace the existing Uxbridge High School, subject to certain limitations, on the Quaker Highway site."

The agency laid out several major conditions for the project:

- 1. The proposed new school must not exceed 123,000 square feet and met MSBA guidelines*
- 2. The total project budget must not exceed \$350 per square foot and total no more than \$43 million*
- 3. The MSBA's maximum total facilities grant would not exceed \$23 million.*

The architect will provide the SBC with a complete schematic design and budget for the project on June 15, 2010

2. What are the compelling reasons for new versus renovation?

SBC Answer:

The "Pros"

- 1. The construction of a new school will provide the necessary space to meet the programmatic standards for a high school.*
- 2. A new high school will resolve the facility problems NEASC identified in its accreditation review.*

3. *The addition of a new high school, together with the realignment of space in the current UHS, Taft and Whitin schools, will help address the town's school choice out problem¹ and remove our dependency on lease space.*
4. *The construction of a fourth school will address overcrowding in Taft and Whitin. Taft is currently at 110% of capacity while Whitin is at 138%.*

<i>Proposed Capacity with new High School Building at Quaker Highway</i>						
<i>School</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Grades Served</i>	<i>Square Feet</i>	<i>MSBA Student Enrollment Design Capacity</i>	<i>2009-10 Enrollment</i>	<i>Proposed Capacity %</i>
<i>Taft</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>PK - 04</i>	<i>84,300</i>	<i>530</i>	<i>481</i>	<i>91%</i>
<i>Whitin</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>03 - 05</i>	<i>88,700</i>	<i>558</i>	<i>480</i>	<i>86%</i>
<i>Existing HS</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>06 - 08</i>	<i>112,800</i>	<i>613</i>	<i>497</i>	<i>81%</i>
<i>New HS</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>09 - 12</i>	<i>123,000</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>460</i>	<i>77%</i>
			<i>Total:</i>	<i>2,301</i>	<i>1,918</i>	

5. *The realignment of grades PreK – 2 in the Taft school places this age group together in one building instead of three as we presently have. This Early Childhood configuration allows for improved curriculum alignment and specialized services needed for students at this age.*
6. *Placing grades 3-5 into the Whitin School and grades 6-8 into the present high school puts our 5th grade students into an elementary school. Fifth grade students are better suited educationally, emotionally and socially for an elementary school structure, not a middle school.*
7. *The construction of a new high school will take two years while the addition/renovation option will take three to five years.*
8. *The construction of a new high school keeps the athletic fields that will be lost under the renovation/addition option. The replacement of these fields is not covered by the MSBA reimbursement parameters.*
9. *The construction of a new high school encompasses a total of 123,000 square feet. Under the Addition/Renovation option 86,570 square feet will be reconfigured² and/or added.*

3. Tax assessment?

- a. To average household?
- b. When will it be implemented?
- c. What does a 20 and 30 year debt service look like?

¹ While no guarantee can be made, communities experience a positive change in school choice funds as a result of new construction

² "Reconfigure" means gutting and rebuilding the existing space

Finance Director Answer:

The Finance Director, in his May 6, 2010 memo, is recommending a twenty year borrowing with level debt. The annual cost to the average taxpayer would be \$326.30 over the twenty year period, assuming a 5.5% interest rate. The tax would begin in 2011.

Cost to Taxpayers

<i>Description</i>	<i>Project Cost</i>	<i>Yearly Cost to Average Taxpayer</i>	<i>Total Cost to Average Taxpayer</i>
<i>20 Year; level debt</i>	<i>\$32,093,075</i>	<i>\$326.30</i>	<i>\$6,526</i>

The Finance Director notes that “all of the figures in this memorandum should be considered preliminary and therefore are subject to change.”

4. Ancillary costs?

- a. What are these?
- b. What is included in the town’s portion of the cost?
- c. What is not included?
 - i. How is the town going to fund these?
 - ii. What is the assessment to the average household?

SBC Answer:

The \$43million project will include all costs to connect water and sewer to the high school. The cost for water and sewer is under review and will be reviewed by May 12 and again on June 15, 2010. The responsibility for these services outside of the high school project is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen

- d. There were discussions that not all athletic fields would be developed initially
 - i. What fields will not be included in the \$43M project?
 - ii. What is the estimated cost for the additional fields and cost to the average household?

SBC Answer:

The design of the high school is currently “a work in process” and won’t be completed until June 15, 2010. Until then, it won’t be known how many fields will be accommodated within the \$43million project budget.

5. Operating costs?

- a. What are the added operating costs in the school budget for the new school?
- b. What are the added operating costs in the municipal budget for the new school?
- c. Has the town manager signed off on these numbers?

SBC Answer:

The costs have been calculated and were reviewed by the Town Manager on May 5, 2010. The projected cost is \$363,122 and includes building and administrative costs and subtracts current lease costs.

6. Ancillary School Operating Costs?

- a. What renovations will be needed for the current high school?
 - i. What is the cost?
 - ii. Assuming it is funded by an override/debt service, what is the assessment to the average household?

SBC Answer:

The beginning of this answer is the SBC has requested the BOS look into a process of determining exactly what the cost would be to renovate the existing HS if the Town chooses to do so. The exact details are not in the current scope for the designers but they have listed some renovations which would help at an estimated \$6.2 million. Not all of the \$6.2 million is of priority need or necessary for a middle school. The details are as follows:

HS breakdown of renovations:

- *30% of windows (the non-1987 & 1996 windows) get replaced*
- *HVAC: Convert whole school to hot water and replace all controls with new DDC system. Provide air conditioning everywhere.*
- *ADA upgrades included widening door openings to corridor in 1936 front wing and handrail/guard upgrades in the 1936 building.*

7. Will any other changes to the schools required additional funding?

- a. Realignment of grades in Taft, Whiten and UHS?
 - i. What is the cost?
 - ii. Assuming it is funded by an override/debt service, what is the assessment to the average household?

SBC Answer:

The Superintendent anticipates there will be no additional costs for the realignment of the schools.

8. What happens if the vote fails?

School Committee Answer:

If the Town chooses not vote on the preferred project, the Board of Selectmen will need to provide the School Building Committee with an additional charge to proceed according to their request. The School Committee, the Board of Selectmen and possibly the Finance Committee should meet to discuss the options available to save accreditation as this is a town wide problem and it will take the whole town to decide on a solution.

Proposed High School:

- Quaker Highway Exterior Plan:
http://www.uxbridgeschools.com/SchoolBuildingCommittee/UHS_%20Gable1Front.pdf
- Floor Plans:
 - First Floor
http://www.uxbridgeschools.com/SchoolBuildingCommittee/UHS_1stFlr_5122010.pdf
 - Second Floor
http://www.uxbridgeschools.com/SchoolBuildingCommittee/UHS_2ndFlr_5122010.pdf
 - Ground Floor
http://www.uxbridgeschools.com/SchoolBuildingCommittee/UHS_GrdFlr_5122010.pdf
- Site Perspective
http://www.uxbridgeschools.com/SchoolBuildingCommittee/UHS_Gable4TechGym.pdf

Committee Recommendations:

The Board of Selectmen (3-2-0) and Finance Committee (5-0-1) have recommended favorable action on the proposed high school.