

**TOWN OF ASHLAND  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 23, 2021**

**Call to Order**

A quorum of five (5) voters being present, this Special Town Meeting is called to order. A total of 985 Nine Hundred eighty-five voters were present.

I'd like to say a few words before we get started today. I've been involved in town government and attending town meetings for over 21 years. A lot has changed during that time but one thing that remained a near constant was the presence of Jimmy Hanna at town meeting. Jimmy passed away recently after an auto accident. Anyone who knew Jimmy will tell you that Jimmy loved Ashland. At town meeting he asked a lot of questions, told a lot of stories and – yes – tried my patience at times. But all Jimmy wanted was what was best for Ashland. We're all better off for having known him and he'll be missed. I'd like to send out my personal condolences and those of the entire town to Jimmy's family. May his memory be a blessing.

I want to take a moment to thank all of you for being here today. This is the third town meeting we've held in the middle of a global pandemic and I fear it won't be the last. Like the last two, my goal leading up to today was to make it as safe as possible from a public health perspective. The additional challenge today is that a meeting with the subject matter we're dealing with would normally draw 500-1000 voters...clearly something we couldn't accommodate in the COVID era.

As a result, and through some very out-of-the-box thinking, today's meeting will be different than any town meeting Ashland has ever had. In fact, it may be the most unique open town meeting ever held in Massachusetts. But more on that in a couple minutes.

- I've eliminated most of the routine preliminaries that I start off with each town meeting.
- We've done our best with seating to promote social distancing and enable contact tracing should that become necessary. Because of that, I'd ask that you respect the placement of the chairs and remain in the chair in which you were seated. Also, masks worn over your nose and mouth were required for entrance to the gym and will be required the entire time you're in the gym including while speaking at a microphone. Even with masks being worn, the microphones will be disinfected after each speaker. When you approach a microphone, please don't touch them or their stands. There will be ushers to make any needed adjustments.
- When we complete our business today I'm going to ask everyone to remain in their seats so that I may direct an orderly and socially distant exit from the gym.
- When you checked-in today you received red and blue index cards. It is important that you hang on to these cards as you will not be able to vote without them.

While I have eliminated most of my typical introductory comments, I do want to remind everyone that all our normal rules still apply, that TM is not the public comment section of a Select Board or School Committee meeting nor is it a public forum or a public hearing, and that TM can only take action within the scope of an article on the posted warrant. Similarly, any discussion is also limited to the scope of the articles on the posted warrant.

## Moderator's Motions

The Moderator's Motions are listed in your handbook on page 4. In addition to the same standard 4 motions we approve each TM we have a 5<sup>th</sup> Moderator's Motion relating to the unique procedures I've put in place for today's meeting. I'd like to first address our normal motions as a group like we always do, then we can move to a separate discussion of motion 5.

1. That this meeting dispense with the reading of the warrant and of the Constable's return of service of that warrant and that the Moderator not be required to read warrant articles verbatim, but may refer to them by number and/or subject matter.
2. That the moderator may extend the floor to Town management and staff and other non-voters provided that they must first be recognized by the Moderator.
3. That the Moderator, pursuant to G.L. c. 39 § 15 be allowed to declare a two-thirds vote rather than taking a standing count.
4. That once final action has been taken on an article and the next order of business has been taken up, or the session of the meeting has been adjourned, the matter may not again be taken under consideration at that town meeting unless, in the best judgment of the Moderator, a significant error or omission occurred in the language or the process of the original action on the article, or a significant change of circumstances has occurred, such that there is a clear likelihood that the outcome could change upon reconsideration or that reconsideration would be in the Town's best interest.

Do I have a motion to approve Moderator's Motions 1,2,3 & 4 as printed in the handbook? Motion was made. There was a second. Raise your red cards to vote. Voted unanimously. Thank you.

Now onto Moderator's Motion #5. I'll first read the motion then – because is something we haven't used before – I'll allow discussion before we vote on the motion.

5. The Articles at this Special Town Meeting shall be considered, debated and voted upon as follows:
  - a. There shall be no motions made or accepted once debate has closed and until the vote tally is announced except to bring the articles to a vote.
  - b. There will be no motions for reconsideration at any time.
  - c. Article 1 (public safety building) will be introduced, followed by presentation of the Article, a motion on the Article and discussion
  - d. Upon conclusion of discussion, the Moderator will entertain a motion to table Article 1 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote
  - e. Article 2 (Mindess school) will be introduced, followed by presentation of the Article, a motion on the Article and discussion
  - f. Upon conclusion of discussion, the Moderator will entertain a motion to table Article 2 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote
  - g. The Moderator will entertain a motion to re-open Articles 1 and 2 solely for the purpose of voting and both articles will be open for voting at the same time
  - h. The Moderator will call for a vote on Article 1 by public display of colored index cards. "Yes" vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 1-Yes box. "No" vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 1-No box.
  - i. The Moderator will call for a vote on Article 2 by public display of colored index cards. "Yes" vote cards will be collected by

volunteers and deposited into the Article 2-Yes box. "No" vote cards will be collected by volunteers and deposited into the Article 2-No box.

- j. The Moderator will announce that following a 15-minute recess during which those present may leave the gym, voting will remain open for approximately 2½ hours (exact time to be determined by the Moderator prior to calling for the recess) during which time registered voters who have yet to vote may come to the high school, check in and vote by public declaration.
- k. At the appointed time, the Moderator will announce the close of voting, then tally and announce the results.
- l. The Moderator will entertain a motion to dissolve the meeting.

Do I have a motion to approve Moderator's Motion #5 as printed in the handbook? Motion was made and there was a second. Is there any discussion. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

All those in favor of Moderator's Motion #5 please raise your blue cards. Opposed. The motion passed. Thank you.

On to our business for the day...

## **Article 1: Authorize Funding to Construct Public Safety Building**

### **Sponsor: Select Board**

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the Select Board for the purpose of paying costs of the project management, site preparation, construction, equipping and furnishing a new Public Safety building located at 12-16 Union Street, including the payment of all incidental and related costs and authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, or any other enabling authority, and that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of the issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with G.L. c. 44 § 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount to be borrowed to pay such cost by a like amount and further provided that said appropriation shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½), or take any other action relative thereto.

**Finance Committee Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends that the Town vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, \$27,400,000 to be expended under the direction of the Select Board for the purpose of paying costs described in the motion for a new Public Safety Building. The Finance Committee also recommends the Town exempt amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on borrowings related to the new Public Safety Building from the limitation on taxes imposed by M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2 ½).

Speaker: Mr. Herbert

## **Town Meeting**

**Clerk's Note: I thought it was important enough to go into detail of the discussion of the Public Safety Building as this project has taken a long time to come to fruition and it will be easy to understand for those reading this. – tmw**

Town Manager, Michael Herbert, thanked everyone for being here today. Before we get started, I want to extend my thanks to the team that put together this special town meeting. The Moderator, Adam Shuster, I think has found a very creative way to do this in a way such that people don't feel that they have to sacrifice their health to participate in their democracy. And I really can't speak enough for our professional team including; Paul Carpenter, Jenn Ball, Tara Ward and Cindy Livingstone. They've really done a really good job putting together a special town meeting under very weird circumstances. So that being said, I'll move right into our presentation. I think some of you have seen this before, if not I hope it's new information.

## **Public Safety Building Presentation**

### **Public Safety Building History**

The Public Safety Building Committee as it is comprised was established two years ago. It consists of Joe Magnani, our Select Board Member; Steve Mitchell, Select Board Member; Michael Herbert, Town Manager; Jenn Ball, Assistant Town Manager; Vincent Alfano, Chief of the Police Department; Keith Robie, Chief of the Fire Department; Paul Carpenter, Director of IT serves as an ex-officio member; Brett Walker and Peter Chisholm both represent the community at large.

In addition to the Building Committee, we also have the fortune of having some very good professional staff working with us. Namely, Jon Lemieux who is our project manager. He is from the Vertex Companies and then our designers and architects from HKT Architects with their principal's Jane Slamenda and Amy Dunlap. They have been involved in this project for three or four years now.

This project has been going on for more than three or four years. Actually, it has been going on for two decades.

We have known that the facilities have been outdated for a while. It was really memorialized in 2002 with a memo from the Police Chief to the Selectmen. Due in part to that memo, the Town Management at that time in 2008 conducted a fire and police station needs assessment and location study which determined that the joint public safety facility was the way to go for this community and also located the location of East Union Street where it splits up heading to the High School at 65 East Union St.

Then in 2014, the Public Safety Building was re-established by Town Manager, Tony Schiavi, at that time. At that time, the committee went through the process of looking at different facilities. Looking at what the upgrades were like and what facility we need to think of moving forward into the future. Then things really began picking up in 2018.

This is the year we hired HKT to do a land feasibility study and to determine the best location for this site. So after looking at a number of sites, it was narrowed down to two. The location of 14-16 East Union Street where Rte. 135 splits up to the High School and then also a site off of the MBTA Access Road. At that point in time, HKT determined that based on the criteria we had established as a community of what we wanted, that the East Union Street was still the best location. They've acknowledged that it's a harder site to work but from an operational prospective, you can't beat it. Just because of the proximity to the Fountain Street bridge and the ability to get over the tracks.

In part because of that study, later that summer, the Select Board signed a gift agreement with the landowner of 14-16 East Union Street, Howard Fafard, for a gift of 3.82 acres for us to build that Public Safety Building facility on. That was affirmed by Town Meeting later that year in November by a Town Meeting vote. Also at that time, the Town voted to appropriate \$3.5 million to start the design and engineering process for the building.

That occurred throughout 2019 and 2020 where we selected the owner's project manager, decided to retain HKT as our engineer and move forward in designing the building.

And here we are today in 2021 almost twenty years after the original date, still talking about this but actually on the cusp of being able to build this much needed facility. I think that anyone who has witnessed or actually had the opportunity to go into any of these stations (hopefully for non-emergency purposes), but if you have ever had a chance to go in there, you know that we need to have a new facility. We have listed a bunch of reasons.

You've heard about the women not having the access to their own facilities inside the building. They have to go to a trailer or the fact that our trucks barely fit into the existing Main Street Fire Station which was built in the 1920's I should add. But it really comes down to respect and dignity of our first responders and doing what's best for our community at large.

We just simply do not have enough space to meet the needs of modern public safety operations. Again, if you have ever had to go in there during a rain event, you will have to dodge rain barrels. If you have ever gone there during a snowstorm you know it's not necessarily the safest place due to the roof structure. Those are just a few of the cursory things you would see if you just went around the building.

I'm actually going to ask Chief Alfano to give a couple of more recent examples that will hopefully highlight just how inadequate these facilities are.

### **Police Department**

Police Chief Vincent Alfano speaks:

"I'll stand sideways because I like to speak to everyone face to face. This is the third Police Department in my law enforcement career that I've had the honor of being associated with.

When I came to Ashland, I noticed two things right away. Number one was the quality of the Police Staff and you know that because you see that every day. The second thing I noticed was the atrocious, dangerous and unsafe facilities that the officers and staff were working in every day.

So, one of the commitments I made to myself and to the staff was that I would work as hard as I could to try to get them the facility that they deserve that is safe.

A lot of other people made that same commitment, many of them are in this room. Architects, Town Officials, our Town Manager, the Fire Department, the Fire Chief, they're all here for the same reason. They know the conditions.

You've seen the list of conditions behind me on the screen. Let me tell you, we had to take that list and edit it to fit on the screen or we'd be here all day, there are just so many deficiencies in both of these buildings. I could go on and on.

What I can tell you is some of the conditions that your Police Officers and Firefighters face every day inside the station which is supposed to be their work area and their safe haven can be more difficult than those positions they face on the street.

And we all know that through this Covid situation, the pandemic, the Police Officers and Firefighters have always been there. They have always shown up for work. They've always gone out and done their job. They need to have a facility that is going to be safe and efficient.

I'll just share a couple of quick stories with you to sort of give you an example of what they have to face every day.

As you know, our female officers and staff have to use a trailer that is falling apart in the parking lot of the Police Station. That trailer is at the end of its life and no matter what happens today, that trailer is going to have to be replaced at a considerable cost. They have to leave the building, whether it is night or day, 2 o'clock in the morning, blizzard or rainstorm to walk outside to use the bathroom. Now we have a skunk who lives under their trailer right under the door. So not only do they have to brave the elements and anybody possibly out there to hurt them, safety wise they have to brave a

skunk to go out to simply use the bathroom. This is 2021. Private industry would never accept or tolerate any of those standards. We need to upgrade those facilities. We need to provide a safe working environment.

Every time our officers arrest someone and bring them into that station, they put themselves in peril through the booking process which should be an administrative process and a safe process, it is not because of the facilities. They put themselves at risk.

We made a drug arrest a couple of weeks ago, you probably saw it in the newspaper, quite a bit of marijuana was seized. When we brought the car that contained the marijuana into the Police Station for processing by the State Police evidence team, our station was literally shut down for two days because the odor of marijuana permeated the entire facility. I could not sit at my desk without almost getting sick to my stomach because the stench was so bad.

We had to expend Town funds to have the facilities department come in to try to deodorize the station.

For one arrest.

We have to pay to have the skunk removed under the doorway of the female locker room before one of the officers is sprayed because they almost have been.

These are funds and monies that I would rather you as a taxpayer see put towards improved training for the officers or put towards additional traffic enforcement, put towards additional patrols.

We shouldn't have to spend money like that on a bad facility. Thank you."

Town Manager Michael Herbert thanked the Chief for explaining this to Town Meeting.

He then asked Chief Robie to come up and provide an example from the Fire Department. Mr. Herbert stated that he wanted to also point out the benefits

to the community of a new station. He can't impress upon the people enough the fact that the new station will be located right next to the Fountain Street bridge which goes over the tracks.

The way our current setup is, it exposes us to some unfortunate situations when the train is going through downtown. Most of us think of that as an inconvenience, a traffic inconvenience, but when you are trying to respond to an emergency, it takes on a whole new meaning of having to sit and wait while a CSX train or Amtrak train comes through.

## **Fire Department**

Fire Chief, Keith Robie, speaks:

"Today I speak to you as the Fire Chief but as of tomorrow I finish my 35<sup>th</sup> year working for the Town as a Firefighter. I have worked extensively in both buildings. I saw the Cedar Street Fire Station built. I actually shared an article with the Town Manager of residents complaining that the Cedar Street Fire Station at the time was the "Taj Mahal". If you've driven by the Cedar Street Fire Station, it's not the "Taj Mahal". We are outgrowing both stations.

We do not have enough space. We can't put in safety procedures that should be in place today. One of the biggest things is cancer. We are finding cancer in the fire service across the country, not just Ashland. It's across the country, the exposures to the toxins that we are bringing back to the Fire Station.

They are educating us to take our gear and separate it from the fire station and let it have its own room, and its own ventilation system so that when we come back, we're not hanging it as we do now. Today we hang it right next to the Fire Station. When you walk inside the Fire Station two weeks after a fire, you can smell the fire still because it's hanging on all our gear. That's probably the biggest thing is that we have no place to move this stuff.

The Town did purchase a washer and dryer for us but had to put them right in the bay of the floor so now we have to back the Fire truck right up to them as there is no other space for it to go.

More concerning is Covid. Everybody knows Covid today. When we come back to the Fire Station after a call, and I'll tell you that we've treated Covid patients, we have no place for those Firefighters to change before going into the Fire Station.

Today, they have to go through the Fire Station, up to the second floor. They are going completely through the Fire Station before they can shower and change in the locker room.

Today, a new Fire Station would allow us to come back, pull in to the station, have a room right off the bay where they would go in and de-contaminate, clean and proceed on with their day and be ready for the next call. So for us, that's probably one if not the biggest thing.

The other thing is again, space. We store a lot of our equipment outside. We store our boat outside. As of right now, we have two boats. One boat is winterized and actually twice this year the boats have been needed. We actually had to call on a mutual aid boat to come and deploy.

So, as Chief I would hope you would support this project, and as a resident who has been a resident my whole life here. Thank you."

Town Manager, Michael Herbert, thanked Chief Robie.

Town Manager, Michael Herbert, explained the building:

"So obviously, the main thing we wanted to correct with the new station is the inadequacies of the current facilities and also bring our Police and Fire operations into this century.

Another thing we wanted to look at was incorporating sustainability as part of this building as well. Because we're looking at becoming a net-zero energy community in 2040 which is quite an ambitious goal, we have to put the work in to do that.

So, the first thing we looked at with this building in terms of trying to make it as energy efficient a possible is that we looked at the HVAC systems. We decided after considerable debate that the best system for us to move forward is the GEO-Thermal heat pump system as opposed to a more traditional HVAC system. It does cost a little bit more, but at the same time it does reduce our gas admissions significantly.

We created a solar-ready building. We felt like putting solar panel at this time on the building was going to be a bit cost prohibitive. However, we wanted to use the opportunity as were building it to do things like reinforce the roof, installing conduit for wiring so that when we are at the point where we can put solar panels on that building we don't have to tear everything up to put that back in.

We also have a number of smaller features that are no less important like electrical vehicle charging stations, low flow fixtures, and we've enhanced insulation in certain parts of the building. We've also utilized a lot of Stormwater collection features with things like rain gardens.

We are very pleased that the Sustainability Committee recently commended our work and felt like this building reflected our commitment to long term sustainability. So we definitely appreciate that. That's what some of the factors were that went into the design plan.

This will be a 3-story building. Its set back approximately 100 feet from the road. We went through an extensive design process including both internally where Police and Firefighters actually had a big role in helping to design the facility. And then the materials and the design of the outside, that was influenced by a number of different people. I really want to thank a member

of our Design Review Committee, Bill Savage who really helped pick out the material for this building.

The first floor plan is dedicated to obviously the main lobby and some of the Police support functions, police operations and for apparatus.

The second floor area included more support area for the Police including the locker rooms. We also have our living quarters for our Firefighters and a lot of room for mechanical systems.

Our third floor plan is really dedicated to the Administration of both the Police and Fire Departments.

I want to make very clear that we did not build a "Taj Mahal". We wanted to be cost conscientious and at the same time we didn't want to be penny-wise and pound foolish. We don't want to be in a situation where we open up a facility and its already outdated because we didn't do this right.

We did look at and we did remove a number of items. We reduced some of the bunks. In the future as staffing increases, we'll probably have to double up on bunks.

We've reconfigured the lobby in the emergency operations center. We consolidated areas such as kitchen and fitness rooms. We've eliminated a jail cell.

Instead of the building running on solar power, the building is solar ready. With all the appropriate wiring."

### **Financial Information**

"All this information is great but at the end of the day, what does this cost and what does it cost you as a taxpayer?

I'll first start off with the project cost itself. We were very fortunate that when we went out to bid, we received a lower construction cost than what we had anticipated.

Now we have moved forward in the middle of a pandemic. We know we've received a lot of criticism for that but it was done strategically. Let me explain why.

Because all of the information we were getting from our professionals was that it is a very favorable construction environment for municipal work. Because there's not that much municipal work out there.

There are contractors who are hungry to get jobs. That's what we saw reflected in the bids that we had received between Christmas and New Year's. This \$22.4-million-dollar construction cost is seven (7) million dollars less than the twenty-nine (29) million dollars we had estimated back in November or December.

Obviously we have to include things like furniture, technology and communications, design, and project management fees. We also beefed up the contingency significantly to \$2.8-million dollars and that leads to a \$30.9 million dollar building. Total project cost.

We had already appropriated \$3.5 million dollars at the 2018 Town Meeting that I had mentioned and that brings our request to \$27.4 million dollars.

I want to bring up the contingency here. A rather high contingency. We've done that for two reasons. First, there is a lot of ledge on the site and even though we've done a lot of investigation and site plan work, you never can tell. We've also budgeted for the next to lowest bidder just in case. If we do not need to use this contingency, you are not taxed for it. It's not going to be factored in to the cost of what you are going to have to pay as a tax payer.

Again, I can't reinforce how lucky we were to get the bid that we did. We are at \$529 per square foot. We are much lower than other communities with new public safety buildings. Even after we factor in a lot of our sustainability features."

## **Budget**

“What this will mean for the annual budget is there is a \$30.9 million dollar to \$1.3 million dollars every year in annual debt service. Traditionally, what Ashland has always done is done that as a debt exclusion so your taxes would be increased enough to pay for that full \$1.3 million dollars. However, what we’re trying to do is reduce the impact and the burden on the taxpayers.

**Capital Budget: So what we have decided to do is actually re-dedicating \$250 thousand dollars from our Capital Budget each year and \$500 thousand dollars within our departmental budgets to help offset the tax increase to pay for this building.**

That brings the debt exclusion amount that we need every year to a little over \$627 thousand dollars. I want to say that this financing plan has been memorialized in the budget. We’ve actually already factored this in to the 2021 budget. It was a little premature. We thought we’d be a little ahead of the game by now. But it’s in the budget now. I will certainly present a budget as long as I am here that reflects that commitment. I’m not planning on going anywhere.

At the end of the day, it’s ultimately Town Meeting that makes the decision on appropriations so if for some reason this plan is derailed from, Town Meeting can simply change it back.

What does that \$627,000.00 equal on your tax bill? Using an average home value of \$427,000.00 looking at this project, it will cost the average taxpayer \$90.00 per year for a 30-year period.

If you look at what the Mindess School is going to cost; if you factor that in looking at the declining debt that we have, the average taxpayer will see a net increase of \$241.00 more than what they are paying now.

That’s for two brand new buildings.

Some of the other financial considerations we haven't factored in but are just as important, we will save over \$30,000.00 a year annually.

We're consolidating the building with new mechanical systems that will lead to less maintenance and utility costs. We can now host training instead of having to pay people to go to training and cover their shifts.

At the same time, departments will actually pay us to do our training in our facility. We have done a great job in moving towards accreditation in terms of our professional staff and policies. However, we are limited by the facility. We will not be able to be accredited until we get a new facility. That's just a fact.

When we do get accredited, that helps us with other financial aspects as well. Including some funding opportunities and some grant opportunities.

You hear a lot of people say that our taxes are too high here. High is a comparative term. I think a lot of times what people are talking about is the efficiency of Government when they are talking about that.

I wanted to show that Ashland is still the best value I feel in Metrowest today.

If you look at expenditures per capita and costs per student, we are still on the low end of expenditures per capita."

Mr. Herbert then showed a chart of thirteen Metrowest communities where it shows that Ashland is actually second from the bottom.

"So everything that we are doing right now, open space purchases, enhancing human services, doing special projects, doing things like the downtown and we're still able to do this about as efficiently as possible. We are just above Marlborough.

The next question is going to be what happens to our enterprise funds. We pay a lot for water and sewer, we pay a lot for trash etcetera. So I just factored in Ashland's enterprise fund and left everyone else's enterprise funds out and did the same analyst. You will see that we raise up just a couple levels. We are certainly efficient."

### **Facility Investment**

"There have been some comments on our lack of investments in facilities or perception of investment facilities. We have made great strides especially over the last five years to increase our investment in our buildings and I think that's reflected in the finances and the budget. We have increased capital spending for facilities significantly over the last five years. This is just the municipal facilities budget. We've made significant increases in that as well including this latest budget."

### **Repurposing the Main Street Properties**

"Finally, I think that one of the most exciting things about this is the fact that if we build a new public safety building, we're going to be able to vacate two key parcels in downtown. The Fire Station, I think that everybody would like to keep it or at least I would like to keep it. We've got some great examples of adaptable re-use. Including just down the street in Framingham at Amazing Things Art Center which is in an old Fire Station. In Norwood, they have the Olde Colonial Café which is a restaurant. They actually pay the town \$90,000 annually to operate there. Nobody that I know of wants to keep the Police Station." He asked for a show of hands and there were none. "One of the ideas that has been tossed around is to raze that and make it a parking facility. If we did, we'd be able to create approximately fifty spots."

### **The Next Steps**

"Depending on a successful vote here and a successful vote on Wednesday, we will move forward with selecting a contractor and then finalizing the

contract documents. In April, we hope to begin construction by breaking ground. Hopefully we will finalize this by the summer of 2022.”

### **Summation**

“I think everybody knows the arguments of the logic for moving forward with this. It’s just one of those things that we need to make the decision if we’re going to make this investment in our community. Communities have to make investments in themselves. It’s the only way you can maintain your quality of life, much less improve it. So, I encourage you all to support this both today and at the ballot on Wednesday. Thank you.” Michael Herbert.

**To allow discussion I’ll entertain a motion. This motion is slightly different than it is in your handbook, not substantively though.**

**Motion on Article 1:** That the Town vote to appropriate \$27,400,000 to be expended under the direction of the Select Board for the purpose of paying costs of the project management, site preparation, construction, equipping and furnishing a new Public Safety building located at 12-16 Union Street, including the payment of all incidental and related costs and authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44, or any other enabling authority, and that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of the issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with G.L. c. 44 § 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount to be borrowed to pay such cost by a like amount and further provided that said appropriation shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

The motion was made and there was a second.

Discussion:

Matt Marshquist from the Sustainability Committee spoke in favor of this article. He stated that the process of working with the Public Safety Building Committee has been a very good one. While they didn't get everything they would like to see in this building, there are a lot of things that are very good. The investment in the Geo Thermal heating system is very smart a good use of funding. This is important for the Town going forward to transition to efficient electric heat in place of natural gas.

Aaron Ladd wanted clarification by asking if Rte. 135 is a State Highway and Fountain St is a town road how the project includes improvements for the intersections of Fountain St and Rte. 135 or Rte. 135 and Main St.

Michael Herbert repeated the question so that he understood it. He stated that the traffic improvements and how we've factored that into the cost and to the budget. As part of the design process, we did do a traffic analysis and looked at the intersections of both Fountain St and Rte. 135 as well as Rte. 135 and the split up to East Union St. He stated we are going to have to do some signalization improvements, we're also going to have to make some changes in the median especially by Fountain St. Those costs including the signalization costs have been factored into this budget.

Chuck Lidz stated that he is also on the Sustainability Committee. He wanted to commend the building committee here for having built what he believes is a cutting edge, well-designed building. As far as sustainability goes, that means that the rest of us are not going to have to make quite as many changes to our lives in order to get to our 2040 goal of which he is extremely proud.

A couple of other things he has to say. One is, this is the time to do this building because interest rates are cheap, stunningly cheap. In his younger days, he once bought a house at 8 ½ percent interest. Most of the payment for this building came from the interest. We are looking at an absolute minimum interest; it won't stay this way. We should do this now.

The other thing he wanted to say is that while the pandemic has been going on, nobody has said that I need the Fire Department now and the Fire Department hasn't said that we are not going to come now because it is dangerous. The same thing holds true for the Police Department. We owe it to them.

David Rubenstein, a resident, spoke stating that he wants to support the Police and Fire Departments. They risk their lives to go out there and protect us without any complaint. The Firefighters are going into burning buildings risking their lives to save our lives. We owe it to them. They deserve more dignified facilities. I will be voting yes for this; he hopes that everybody else will too.

The Moderator asked if there were any further discussion. Seeing none, he explained that the folks who could not attend Town Meeting would be able to email questions to him and he would bring them to the attention of Town Meeting.

There were two people who responded.

The first question was about the tax impact which was explained in detail here earlier and the second was whether or not in the next 5 or 10 years there's any other general government projects which would potentially require a debt exclusion.

Town Manager, Michael Herbert, explained that we currently do not have any planned debt exclusions over the next 5 to 10 years.

Being no further discussion, I'll entertain a motion to table Article 1 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote.

A motion was made and there was a second.  
Vote with blue cards (simple majority) was passed unanimously.

## **Article 2: Authorize Funding to Complete Design and Construct New Mindess School Building**

**Sponsor: Select Board/School Committee**

### **Mindess School Project Presentation**

#### **Animation - Schematic Design - Building and Site Flyover**

To see if the town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Mindess School Building Committee for the purpose of paying costs of the design, construction, equipping, and furnishing of a new replacement facility for the existing David Mindess Elementary School located at 90 Concord Street, including the payment of all incidental and related costs, including but not limited to building demolition and site preparation, which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) Fifty-five and fifty-seven one hundredths percent (55.57%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA. Further to authorize use of the construction management at risk delivery method pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.149A, §§1-13, and that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of the issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with G.L. c. 44 § 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount to be borrowed to pay such cost by a like amount and further provided that said appropriation shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to

exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½), or take any other action relative thereto, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Finance Committee Recommendation:** The Finance Committee recommends that the Town vote to appropriate \$83,387,000 to be expended under the direction of the Mindess School Building Committee for the purpose of paying costs described in the motion for a new replacement facility for the existing David Mindess Elementary School with the understanding that the appropriation will be net of the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA. The Finance Committee also recommends the Town exempt amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on borrowings related to the new replacement facility for the existing David Mindess Elementary School from the limitation on taxes imposed by M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2 ½).

Speaker: Mr. Kendall

Mr. Paul Kendall was the speaker for Article 2. He thanked the facilities and IT departments and everyone else involved in setting up this special town meeting. He was here last night (Friday) and saw how much work went into keeping this safe for citizens.

Mr. Kendall thanked the Building Committee members. He explained the history of this. This project started back in 2017. The committee was formed in 2018. It's been 2-3 years of work on this project, getting it to this point. A lot of effort went into this process and he thanked everyone for that.

The project has a couple of features. There are 3 designated outdoor learning spaces. There is a printout of this as well. (see attached). For sustainability purposes, there was a real focus on creating a compact building footprint.

They will construct the new school while operating the old school.

In the summer of 2023 they will demolish the existing building. The school will re-open in the fall of 2024.

MSBA re-imbusement rate will be 55.57%.

To allow discussion I'll entertain a motion

**Motion on Article 2:** That the Town of Ashland appropriate the amount of Eighty-Three Million, Three Hundred Eighty-Seven Thousand (\$83,387,000) Dollars for the purpose of paying costs of the design, construction, equipping, and furnishing of a new replacement facility for the existing David Mindess Elementary School located at 90 Concord Street, including the payment of all incidental and related costs, including but not limited to building demolition and site preparation, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children for at least 50 years, and for which the Town of Ashland may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the direction of Mindess School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation, the Town Treasurer with approval of the Select Board, is authorized to borrow said amount under M.G.L. Chapter 44, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The Town of Ashland acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town of Ashland incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town of Ashland; provided further that any grant that the Town of Ashland may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) Fifty-five and fifty-seven one hundredths percent (55.57%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA; provided that any appropriation hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½); and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be

reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the Town of Ashland and the MSBA and further to authorize use of the construction management at risk delivery method pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.149A, §§1-13 and further that any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of the issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with G.L. c. 44 § 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount to be borrowed to pay such cost by a like amount.

#### Discussion:

John Kirwan, resident asked: How many students with this new schoolhouse? 630 students in Mindess School currently. Will there be an operational override? No High School there is 205 students per grade. Let's not be penny wise and pound foolish.

Patricia Kendall, 6 Reebenacker Rd – speaking as a parent. The only thing in bad shape is the school, not the teachers.

Matt Marshquist – Sustainability Committee member and a parent. Building has smart decisions around sustainability. In favor of this project. As a parent who has 3 kids, 1 just finishing Mindess and 2 coming up through it next. Staff is not the issue, not ADA compliant. Do right by the school and vote yes.

Claudia Bennett – Principal, Resident, Building Committee Member. Building has a 66-year history. High School, Pre-school, Middle School, everything. Building does not support the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Supports both projects.

Chuck Lidz – Think of this as our economic future. We have to have the best education system if we are to prosper.

Jim Duane – As someone who is involved with Parks and Recreation and running those services for a municipality, he is a huge advocate for

community and is in favor of this. This is an opportunity to create an up-to-date educational facility that for a majority of the time during the summers, school vacations and after hours will serve as an incredible community service. He thanked the Administration and the Town Leadership. He stated that this is the stuff that makes a community a great place to live, work, and play. When he looks at the investment that we are making in this town, it makes him proud to be a member of this town.

Joe Magnani – Was a former student at this school. Joe said it's time to knock this down and replace the building. It is an investment in the entire community. He fully supports this. This is an investment we can be proud of. Joe supports both projects for the betterment of the town.

Being no further discussion, I'll entertain a motion to table Article 2 for the sole purpose of bringing the article back from the table later in the meeting for a vote.

Motion made and seconded.

Vote with blue cards (simple majority). The Moderator announced that this was voted unanimously.

Now that we've completed the discussion of the two articles on the warrant, I'd like to explain how things will go from here. Momentarily, I will seek a motion to re-open Articles 1 and 2 for the sole purpose of voting and to allow both articles to be open at the same time. Assuming the motion passes, we will move immediately to the votes.

First, we'll vote on Article 1, the public safety building. I'll ask all those in favor to raise their blue cards and keep them raised so that they may be collected by the volunteers. After collection, the volunteers will deposit the "yes" votes in the "Yes on 1" box that I have up here. Once all the "yes" votes have been collected and deposited, I'll ask all those opposed to raise their blue cards and keep them raised so that they may be collected by the volunteers. After collection, the volunteers will deposit the "no" votes in the "No on 1" box that I have up here. Once we've completed voting on Article

1, we'll move to Article 2 – the Mindess school. We'll follow the exact same procedure except with the red cards that you all have.

At the conclusion of voting on Article 2, I will recess Special town Meeting for 15 minutes. During that period those in the gym may leave – though I'd ask everyone to remain in your seats so that I may coordinate the exit in an orderly and socially distant manner. I'll also announce the starting time of the "voting period" which will last 2½ hours. If you're watching us remotely, the "voting period" is when you can come to the high school, register, come in the gym and vote. Voting will either be done in small groups the way we are about to conduct the vote here or by individual public declaration of vote – depending on the number of voters presenting themselves at any one time.

The line will be outside.

At the appointed time, I will announce the close of voting, then tally and announce the results; after which I'll entertain a motion to dissolve the meeting.

At this time, I'll entertain a motion:

Motion to close doors, there was a second. Nobody was able to enter the doors.

**Motion: To re-open Articles 1 and 2 for the sole purpose of voting and that both Articles be open for voting at the same time.**

Vote with blue cards (simple majority) The Moderator announced that this motion passed unanimously. Due to the need for assistance, Josh Shuster was sworn-in as Assistant Town Moderator at 1:15 PM.

OK, let's begin the voting. Please note that each of the articles involves borrowing and therefore requires a 2/3 majority to pass. Assuming passage today, the articles will also need to pass by simple majority at the town election being held next Wednesday.

All those in favor of Article 1 – the public safety building – please raise your blue cards and keep them raised until they are collected by the volunteers.

Volunteers, please collect the cards in your designated section and bring them to me in the front.

Are there any remaining "yes" votes on Article 1 that have not been collected?

All those opposed to Article 1 – the public safety building - please raise your blue cards and keep them raised until they are collected by the volunteers. Volunteers, please collect the cards in your designated section and bring them to me in the front.

Are there any remaining "no" votes on Article 1 that have not been collected?

Now moving to Article 2...

All those in favor of Article 2 – the Mindess school – please raise your red cards and keep them raised until they are collected by the volunteers. Volunteers, please collect the cards in your designated section and bring them to me in the front.

Are there any remaining "yes" votes on Article 2 that have not been collected?

All those opposed to Article 2 – the Mindess school - please raise your red cards and keep them raised until they are collected by the volunteers. Volunteers, please collect the cards in your designated section and bring them to me in the front.

Are there any remaining "no" votes on Article 2 that have not been collected?

**The time is now 12:00 PM. I declare Special Town Meeting in recess until 12:15 PM at which time the "voting period" will commence and remain open until 02:45 PM.**

**At 12:15 PM, the Moderator announced that Town Meeting was back in session. Throughout this time period of 12:15 PM until 2:45 PM, voters came in groups and voted either for or against the**

**articles. At the direction of the Moderator, volunteers walked about the room and collected the cards in baskets and brought them up to the front of the "stage" where the Moderator had separate boxes clearly marked YES for Question 1 for the Public Safety Building and NO for Question 1 for the Public Safety Building. There were also boxes clearly marked YES for Question 2 New Mindess School and NO for Question 2 New Mindess School. The cards were then being tallied by the Town Moderator with the assistance of the Town Clerk and the Town Clerk Staff after each group voted so that we could have a final number quickly.**

The Moderator announced that the time is now 2:45PM and the "voting period" is closed. I have been tabulating the votes throughout the afternoon so I should be able to announce the results fairly quickly.

With a vote of 956 in favor and 22 against, Article 1, the public safety building passes.

With a vote of 950 in favor and 27 against, Article 2, the Mindess school passes.

After the Moderator declared the results of each article, applause rang throughout the gym.

There was a motion made to dissolve Town Meeting and a second.

Town Meeting dissolved at 2:56PM.

A true copy

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Tara M. Ward, CMC/CMMC Ashland Town Clerk



# Public Safety Building Project Forum

## **Introductions – Public Safety Building Committee**

- **Joe Magnani**, Select Board Member
- **Steve Mitchell**, Select Board Member
- **Michael Herbert**, Town Manager
- **Jennifer Ball**, Assistant Town Manager
- **Vincent Alfano**, Chief of the Police Department
- **Keith Robie**, Chief of the Fire Department
- **Paul Carpenter**, Director of Technology (ex-officio)
- **Brett Walker**, Community Member
- **Peter Chisholm**, Community Member

## **Introductions**

Project Management- The Vertex Companies, Inc.

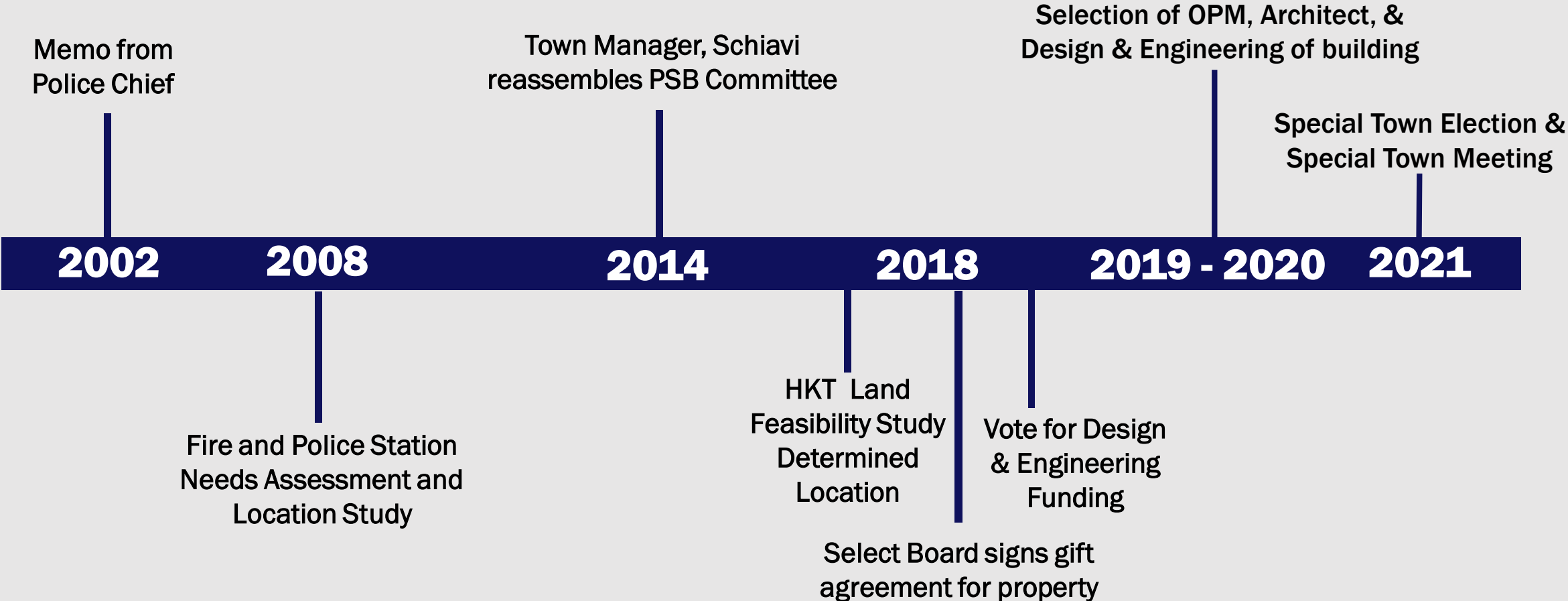
- Jon Lemieux

Designer – HKT Architects, Inc.

- Janet Slemenda
- Amy Dunlap

# Timeline

A new public safety building has been a topic of conversation around town for nearly twenty years



# **Need for a New Building**

---

# Public Safety Building Project



## New Facility Provides...

### Health, Safety, Wellness, and Space

- Appropriate storage and decontamination for firefighter's gear
- Creates a female officer locker room
- Provides a safe booking station for officers
- Creates space for officers and firefighters to safely and effectively exercise
- Eliminates physical safety hazards such as the copper roof at the current Police Station
- Dependable generator systems
- Abundance of space for daily functions to include, admin. offices, training room, day room, locker rooms, storage.
- Provides private rooms to converse with witnesses, victims, residents, and staff

### Emergency Operations Center & Dispatch/ Communications Operations

- EOC allows for a coordinated response to large scaled events
- Emergency Generator Provision
- Updated radio and Communications Systems
- 911 Equipment Consoles
- Dispatch

### Addresses Community Concerns

- Ashland Fire Department's Response Time
  - Train Schedule
  - Equipment
- EOC provides the space for community training opportunities



# **Sustainability Features**

---

## The selected Public Safety Building design utilizes energy systems with the lowest emissions.

Preliminary Energy Savings Analysis by Eversource shows an Annual Electrical Savings of 114,609 kWh, with an Energy Cost Savings of \$26,816 compared to baseline systems.



### Ground source (Geothermal) heat pumps



### Solar ready building



### Electric vehicle charging stations

### Additional Key Features

- LED Lighting & Dark Sky Compliant Lights
- Enhanced Insulation Values for the Building
- Green Roofs- rain garden
- Low-flow fixtures
- Drought Tolerant, Low Maintenance Landscaping

### Statement from Sustainability Committee

“The Sustainability Committee commends their (the Public Safety Building Committee) commitment to long term sustainability planning on this project and we recognize that this project aligns with Ashland's long term goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2040.”

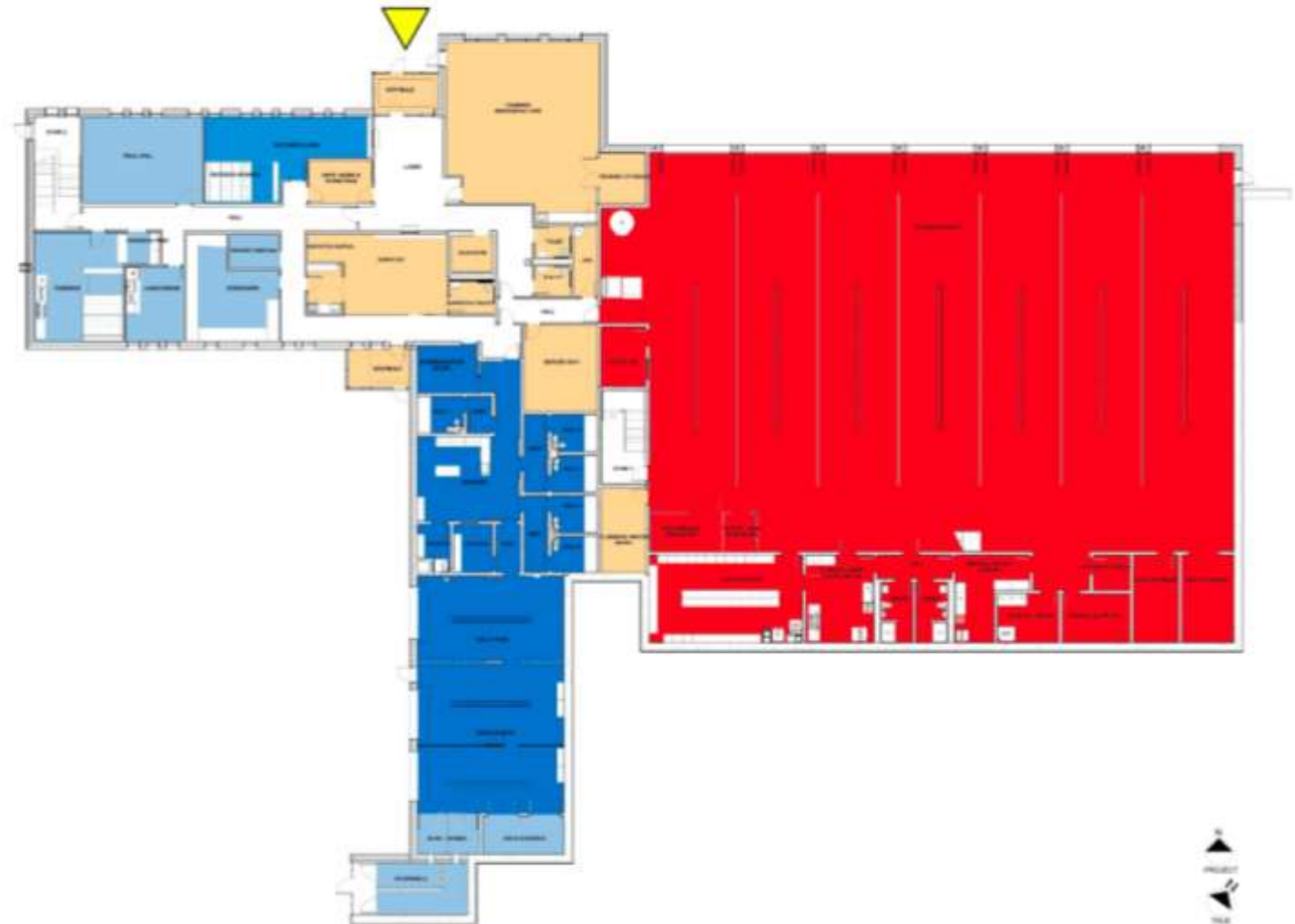
# **Public Safety Building Design Plan**

---



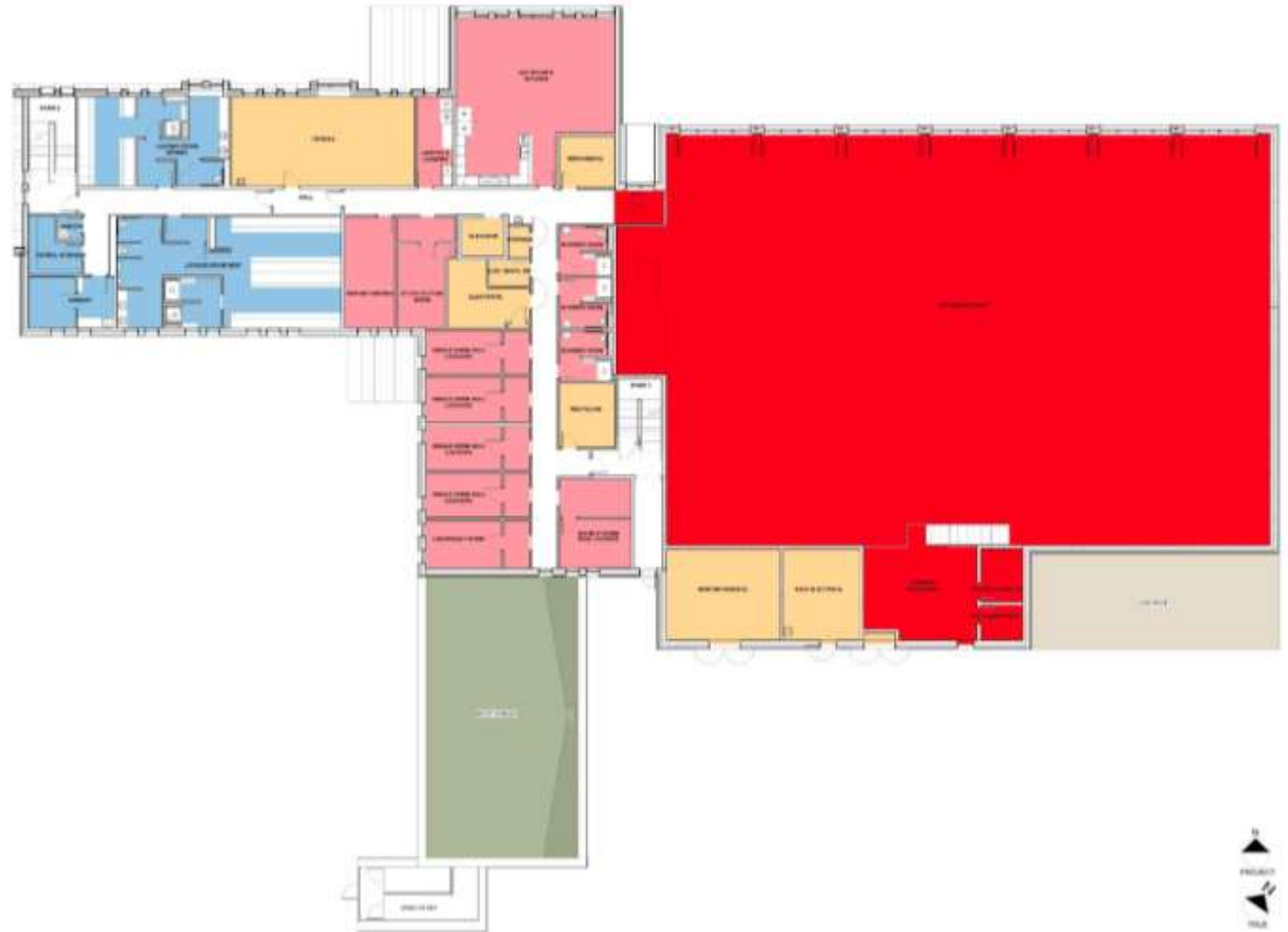
## FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- Main Public Entry with Lobby
- Dispatch, Records + Meeting Room all located off Lobby
- Elevator to Third Level Administration Areas
- Police Operations, Sally Port + Detention
- Fire Apparatus + Support Areas



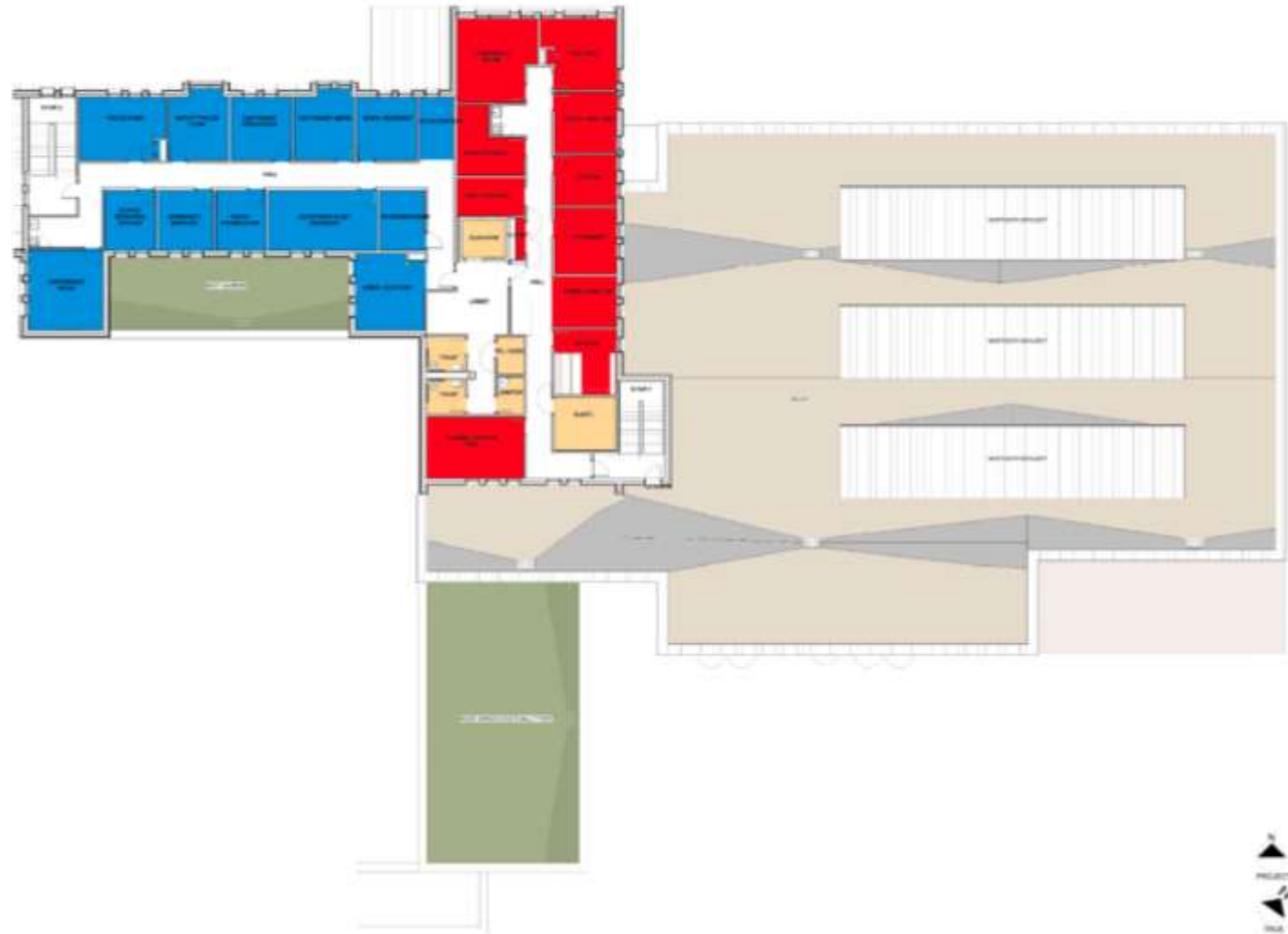
## SECOND FLOOR PLAN

- Police Support Areas including Locker Rooms
- Fire Living Quarters
- Portion of Mezzanine above Apparatus Bays dedicated to Fire Operations
- Other Portion reserved for Mechanical Electrical Systems



## THIRD FLOOR PLAN

- Police Administration
- Fire Administration
- Both Areas accessed from Shared Elevator Lobby



## **Items Eliminated to Reduce Cost**

- Reduced bunks – In the future we may need to double up in a dorm room
- Reconfigured Lobby and Emergency Command Center
- Consolidated areas such as kitchen and fitness rooms
- Eliminated a Jail Cell
- Instead of the building running on Solar Power, the building is Solar ready, with all the appropriate wiring

# **Financial Information**

---

# Public Safety Building Project

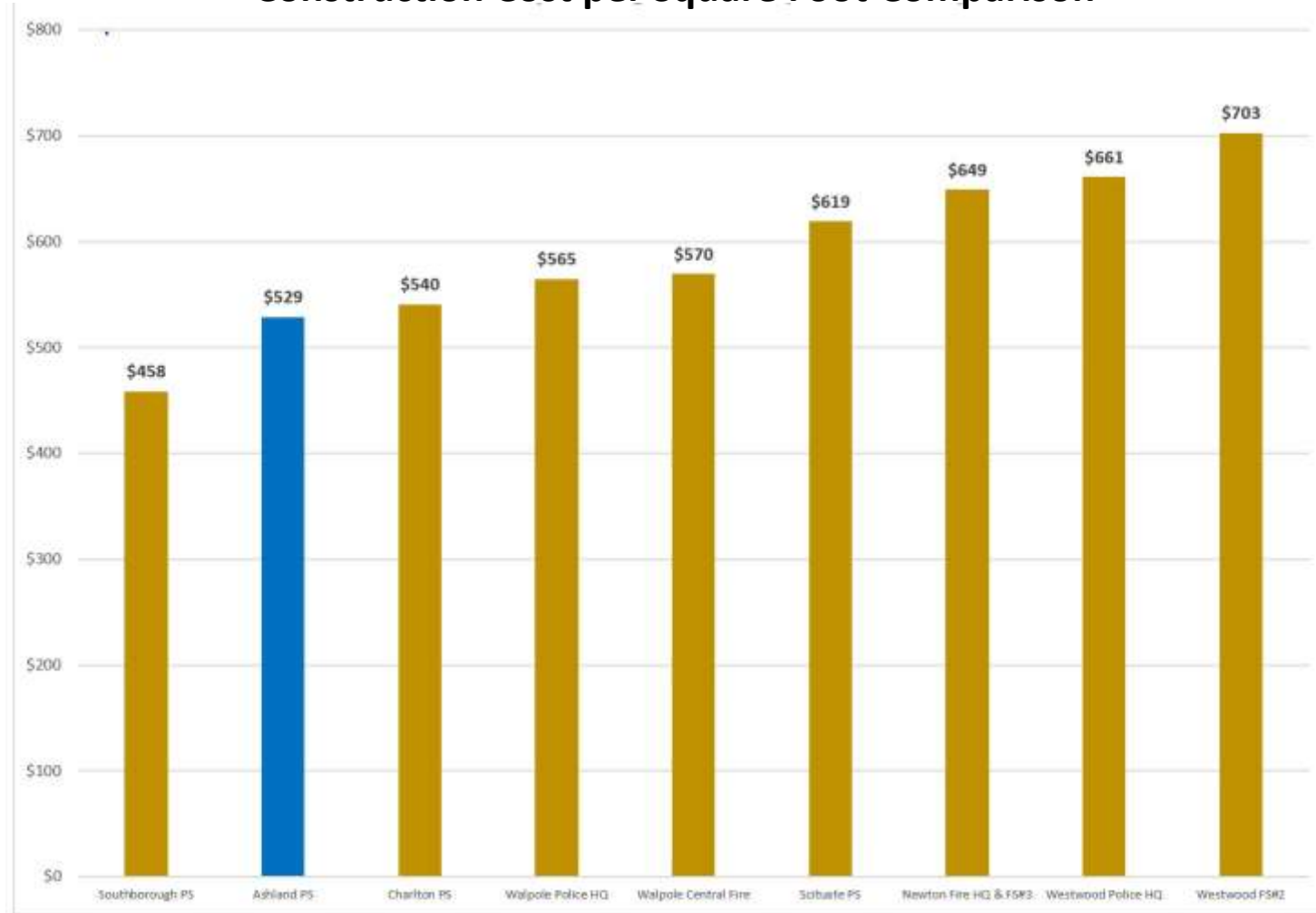


## Ashland Public Safety Building

### Total Project Budget

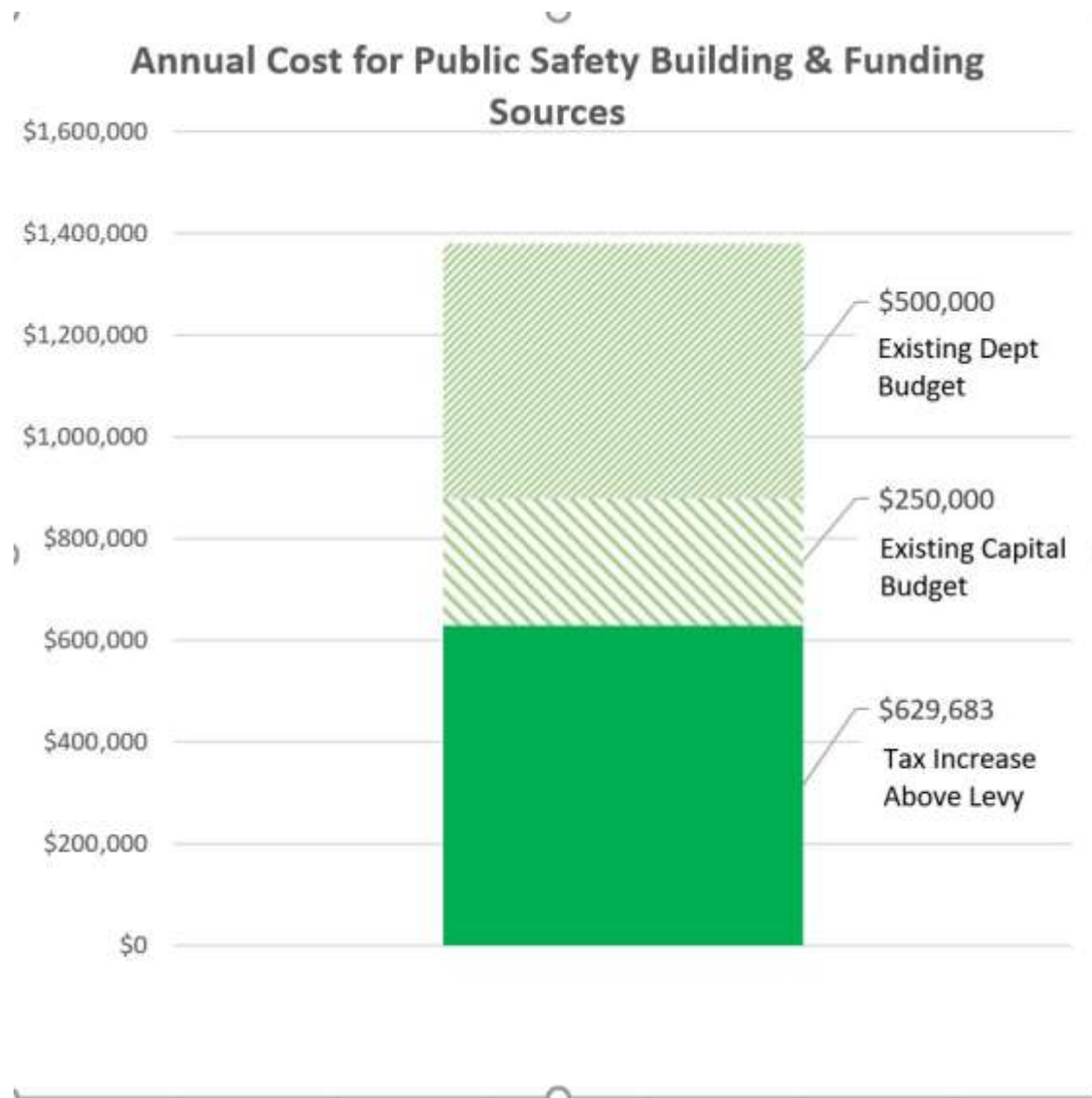
Description	Cost	Notes
Construction (building and site)	\$ 22,445,000	GC bid; traffic signal work
FFE - Technology - Communications	\$ 1,600,000	FFE, IT, radios, dispatch, tower
Design	\$ 2,559,880	Designer fees
OPM	\$ 676,400	OPM fees
Other Administrative Costs	\$ 800,000	Builder's Risk, commissioning, testing, utility fees
Contingency	\$ 2,818,720	For hard and soft costs
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>\$ 30,900,000</b>	
Less Prior Appropriation	\$ (3,500,000)	
<b>2021 Town Meeting Request</b>	<b>\$ 27,400,000</b>	

## Construction Cost per Square Foot Comparison



## BUILDING COST

- COVID has led to an extremely competitive bidding environment for municipal projects, evidenced by the fact that the low bid came in \$7 million less than our last estimate
- The resulting cost per square foot is lower than many other projects that our OPM has worked on
- This is even after site work costs and more expensive sustainability features have been incorporated into the design.



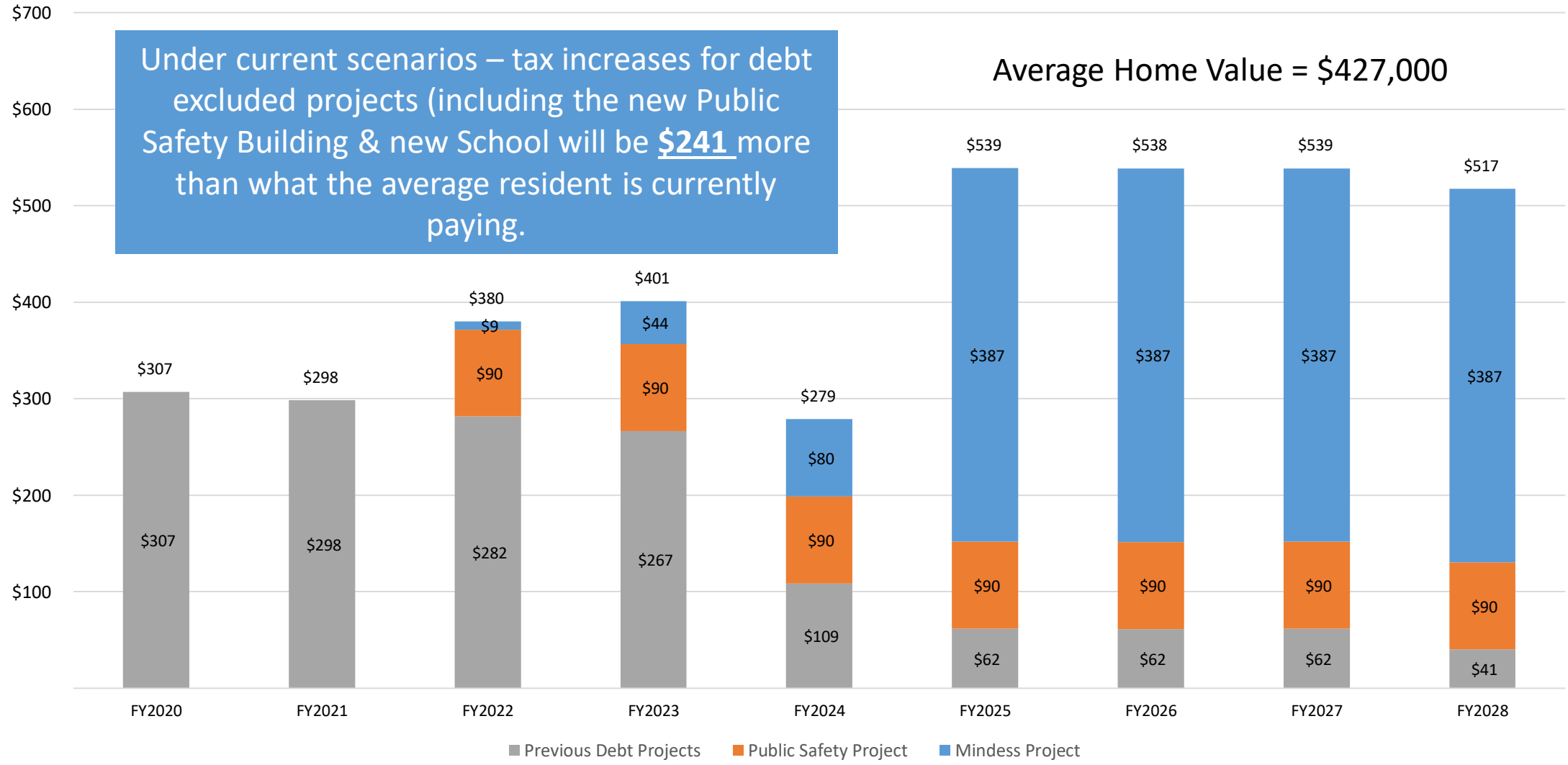
## ANNUAL BUDGET COST

- Total annual debt service for the project will be **\$1,379,683**
- Normally, this would be financed entirely through a debt exclusion (meaning a tax increase over and above the levy limit).
- In order to reduce the tax burden for Ashland residents, we have found other parts of the budget that we are willing to cut or pay for from revolving funds in order to help pay for the project, including \$250,000 in capital funding and \$500,000 in department budgets
- **This reduces the required debt exclusion by a little more than half, or \$629,683**

## Estimated Average Single-Family Tax Increase For Debt Excluded Projects

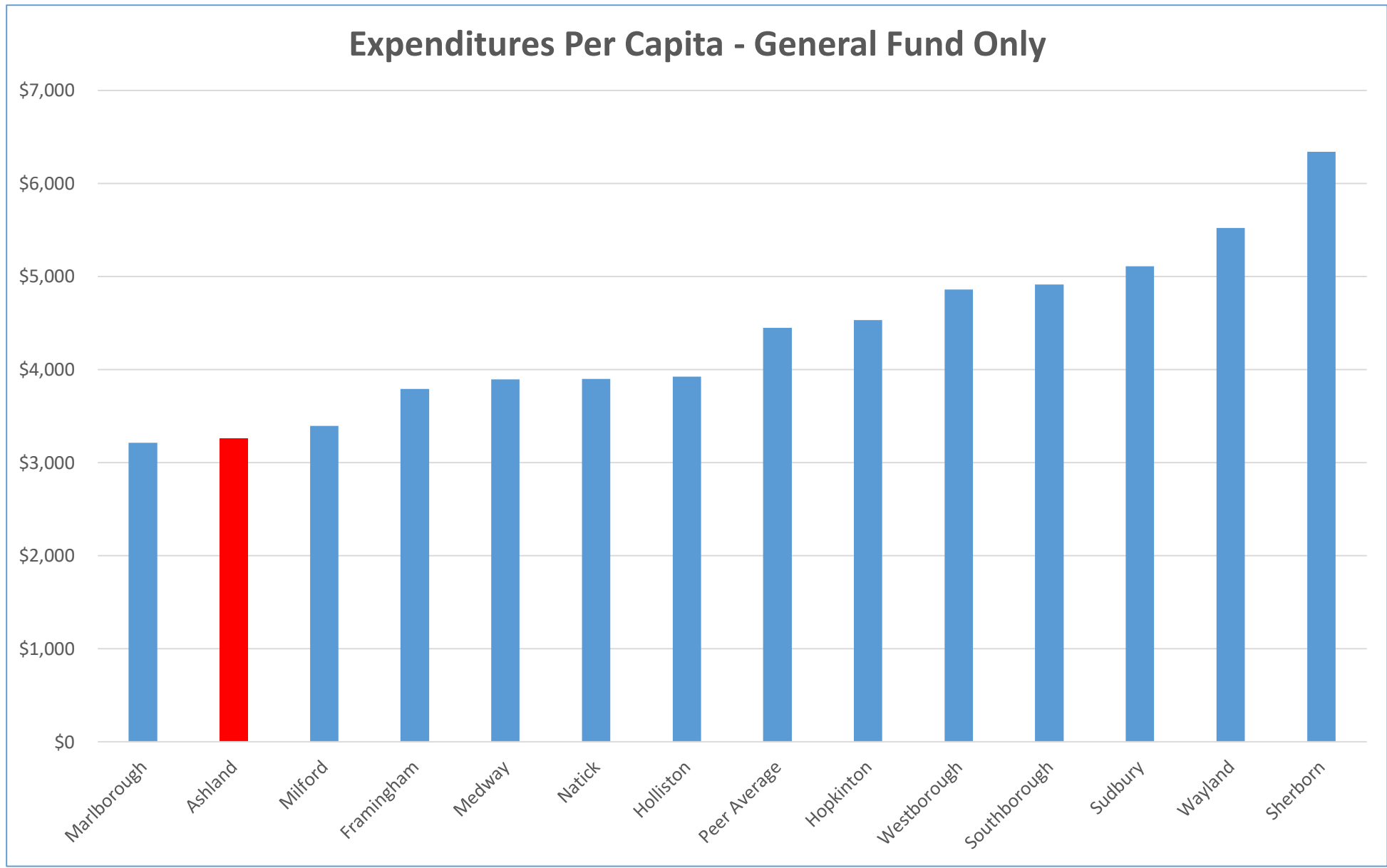
Average Home Value = \$427,000

Under current scenarios – tax increases for debt excluded projects (including the new Public Safety Building & new School) will be **\$241** more than what the average resident is currently paying.

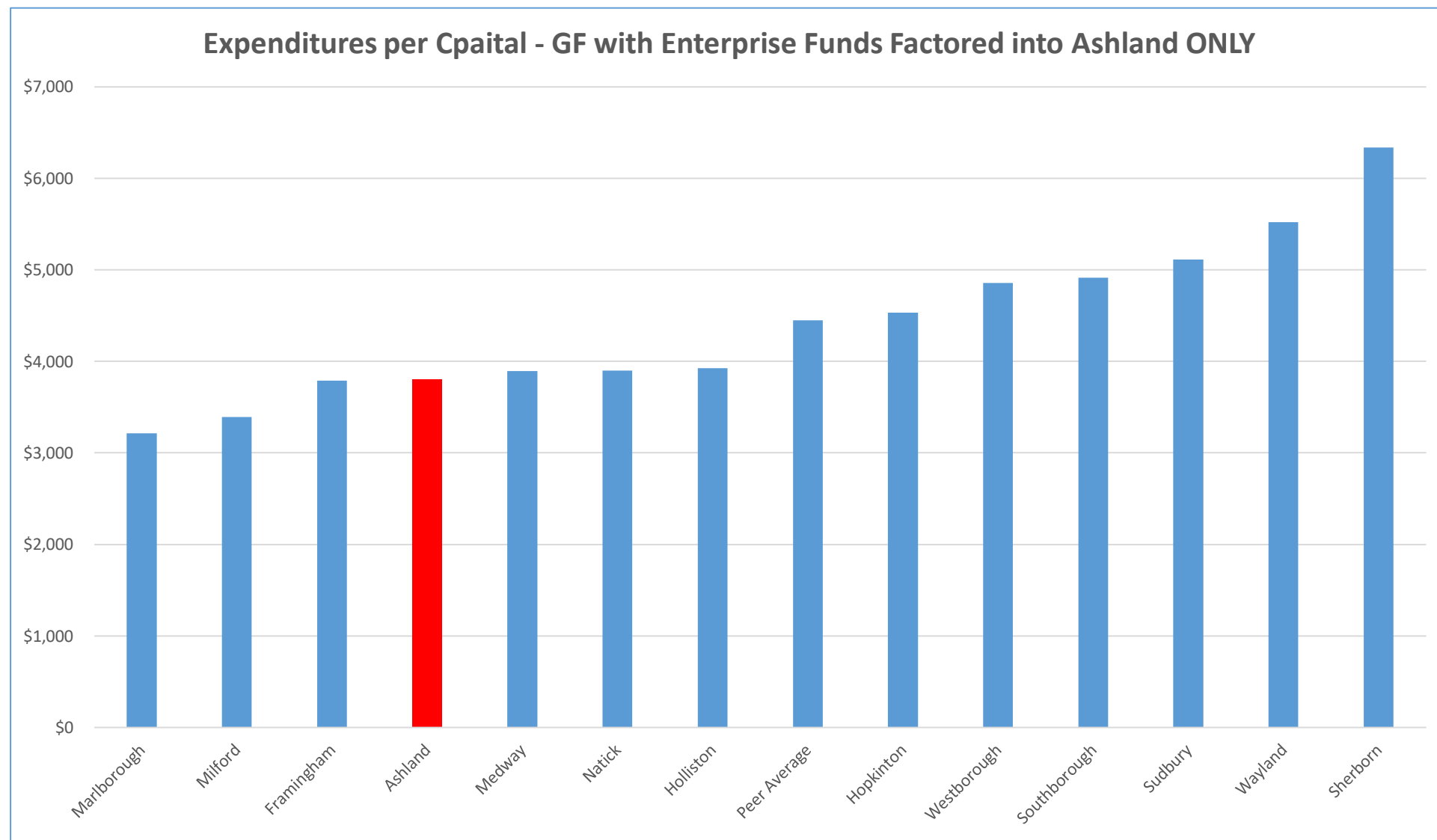


## **Other Financial Considerations**

- Will save over \$30,000 annually in rent for 91 Main Street
- Consolidated buildings lead to less maintenance costs
- Building is more energy efficient, leading to utility savings
- Can now host training, including firearms qualifications, which will produce revenue
- Will be able to conduct training in house saving on class fees and overtime costs for coverage
- Funding opportunities for facility accreditations



# Public Safety Building Project

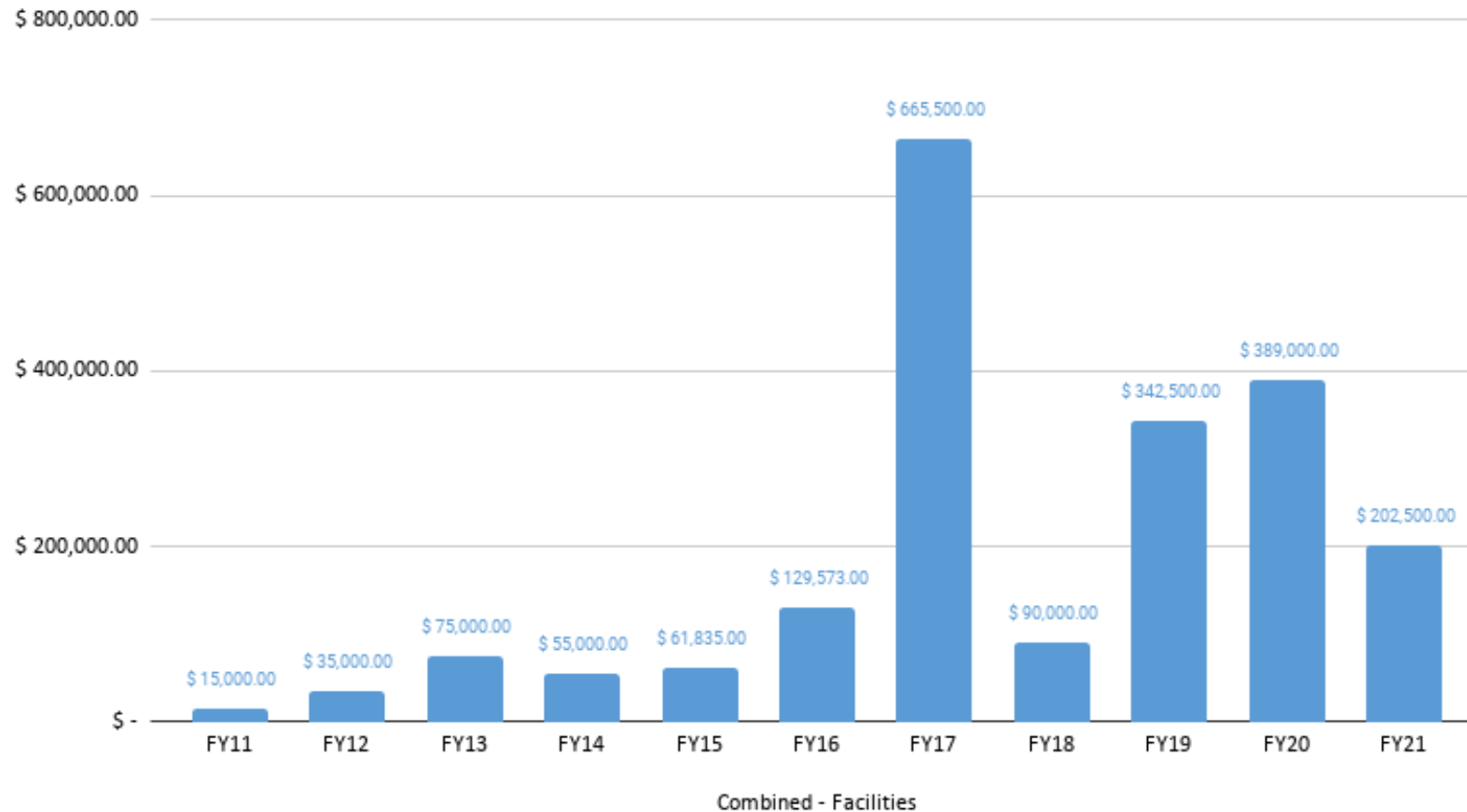


# **Facility Investment**

---

# Public Safety Building Project

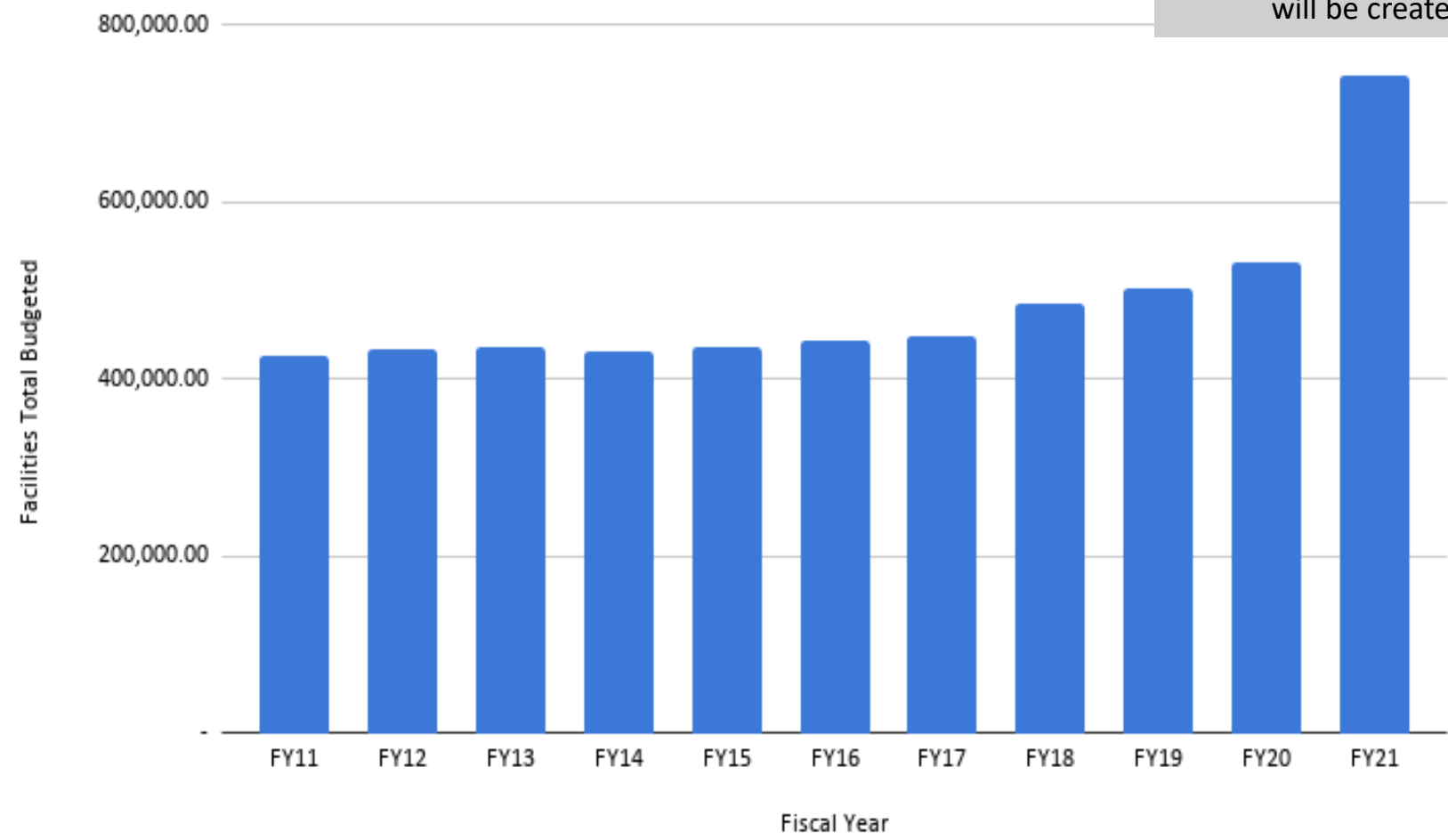
## Facilities Investment: PAYGO Capital Budget



- Ashland instituted new financial policies in FY14 and FY15 – also reduced fixed costs by making changes in employee health insurance and energy efficiency upgrades
- One of the goals of this restructuring was to free up money for more facilities and community development projects
- Chart does not show upgrades made through grant programs or through performance contract

## Municipal Facilities Budget

Stand-alone facilities dept  
will be created



- Ashland has steadily increased its facilities budget since 2017
- After departure of most recent Director, the decision was made to create separate facilities departments for both school and municipal buildings

# **Repurposing the Main Street Properties**

---



## Current Main Street Properties

Fire Station 1- 151 Main Street

Police Station- 137 Main Street

Main Street properties provides new opportunities!  
We could have plans to revitalize these locations by  
Summer 2022!

Residents voiced examples for the downtown space  
including - Art Center, Restaurant, Mixed- Used  
Workplace & Housing.

If the Police Station on Main Street is demolished and  
turned into a parking lot, this would create 50 spots.

## Norwood's Olde Colonial Café

Leased for \$89,425 annually with 2.5% increase per year

The 1906 fire station became a functioning family  
restaurant in 1999 and continues operations today.

Photo and information by [norwoodthenandnow.com](http://norwoodthenandnow.com)

## Amazing Things Art Center in Framingham

Leased for \$90,000

The historic Hollis Street Firehouse was converted and  
leased to the nonprofit organization, ātac.

ātac houses performances, art exhibits, film screenings,  
classes, and more. In 2015, ātac created a partnership  
with Exhibit 'A' Brewing Company, launching a third  
gallery space.

Photo and information by [atac160.org](http://atac160.org)



# **Next Steps**

---

- **January 2021: Town Vote at Special Town Meeting and Special Town Election**
- **February 2021: Finalize Contract Documents with Lowest Qualified Bidder**
- **April 2021: Begin Rock Excavation & Removal**
- **Summer 2021: Begin Construction**
- **Summer 2022: Finalize Construction & Commissioning**



# Mindess School Building Project

## Schematic Design Phase

### Special Town Meeting

January 23, 2021



Compass Project Management

Ashland Public Schools

**FLANSBURGH**

# Agenda

- Introductions
- Site Planning
- Building Organization and Floor Plans
- Sustainability
- Schedule Review
- Budget & Reimbursement Review
- Discussions and Questions

# Building Committee Members

<b>Michael Herbert</b>	Town Manager
<b>James Adams</b>	Superintendent
<b>Yolanda Greaves</b>	Select Board
<b>Paul Kendall</b>	School Committee
<b>Chris Mathieu</b>	Director of Finance and Operations
<b>Paul Carpenter</b>	Director of IT
<b>Ron Mortensen</b>	Director of Facilities
<b>Michael Caira</b>	Assist. Superintendent
<b>Claudia Bennett</b>	Mindess Principal
<b>Melissa Mercon Smith</b>	Director Extended Day Program
<b>Ed Hart</b>	Finance Committee
<b>Christopher Lee</b>	Community Member
<b>Nicholas DiGiovanni</b>	Community Member
<b>Ketan Joshi</b>	Community Member
<b>Tilak Subrahmanian</b>	Community Member
<b>Tim MacKay</b>	Community Member
<b>Michael Kane</b>	Community Member

# Project Team

## Project Management

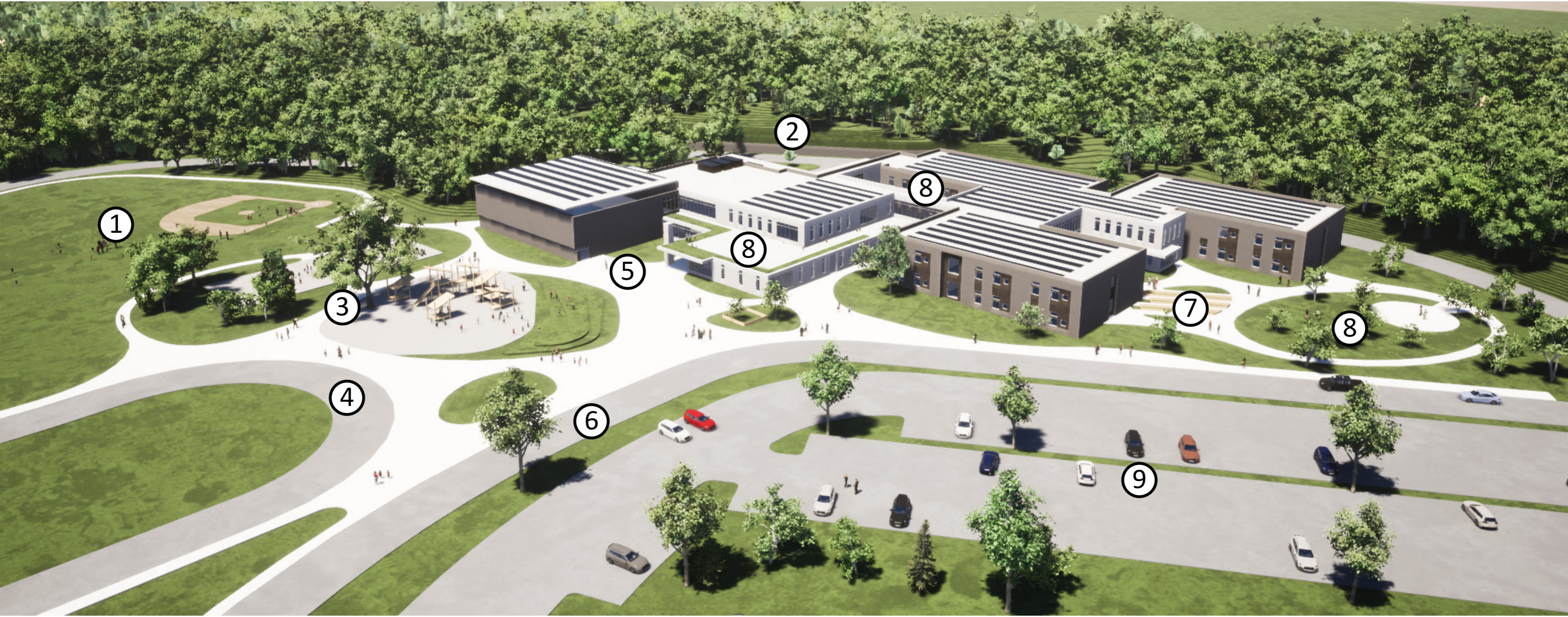
<b>Jeff D'Amico</b>	Compass Project Management
<b>Mike Quinlan</b>	Compass Project Management
<b>Lauren Westman</b>	Compass Project Management

## Design Team

<b>Kent Kovacs</b>	Flansburgh Architects
<b>Bill Beatrice</b>	Flansburgh Architects
<b>Chris Schaffner</b>	The Green Engineer

# Site Planning

# Mindess Campus



- 1. Play Fields
- 2. Emergency/Service Road
- 3. Play Area

- 4. Bus Pick-up and Drop-off
- 5. Entry Plaza
- 6. Parent Pick-up and Drop-off

- 7. Garden Beds
- 8. Outdoor Learning
- 9. Parking

# Site Plan

## A. Neighborhood Response

- Dense buffer plantings and existing woodland between residential neighborhood and parking and school building
- Welcoming campus green along site's frontage on Concord Street

## B. Community Play / Athletics

- Interior and exterior programming are linked - Play area and ball fields are located immediately adjacent to the gymnasium and the cafeteria
- Play area, ball fields, gymnasium and cafeteria are additional resources to the community during non-school hours.
- Heavy wooded area to far west between fields and neighboring residences.

## C. Outdoor learning opportunities

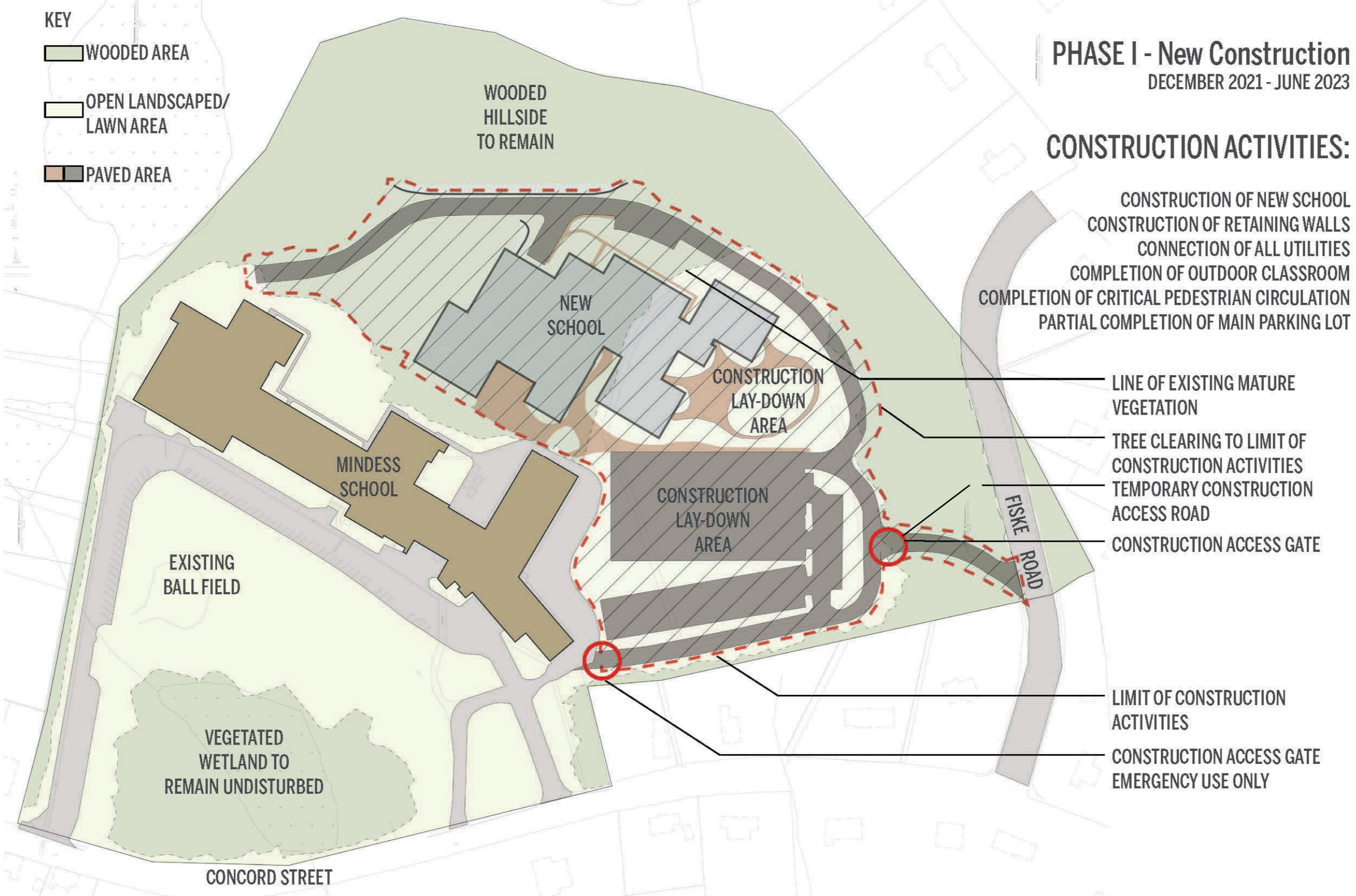
- Interior and exterior programming are linked - classrooms, outdoor learning areas and gardens are located at the quiet, recessive portion of the site, providing students with daily views of nature.
- Existing natural features such as wetlands, ledge outcroppings and mature woodlands provide students with unique learning experiences
- Mature woodland can provide community with areas for woodland trails and exercise paths



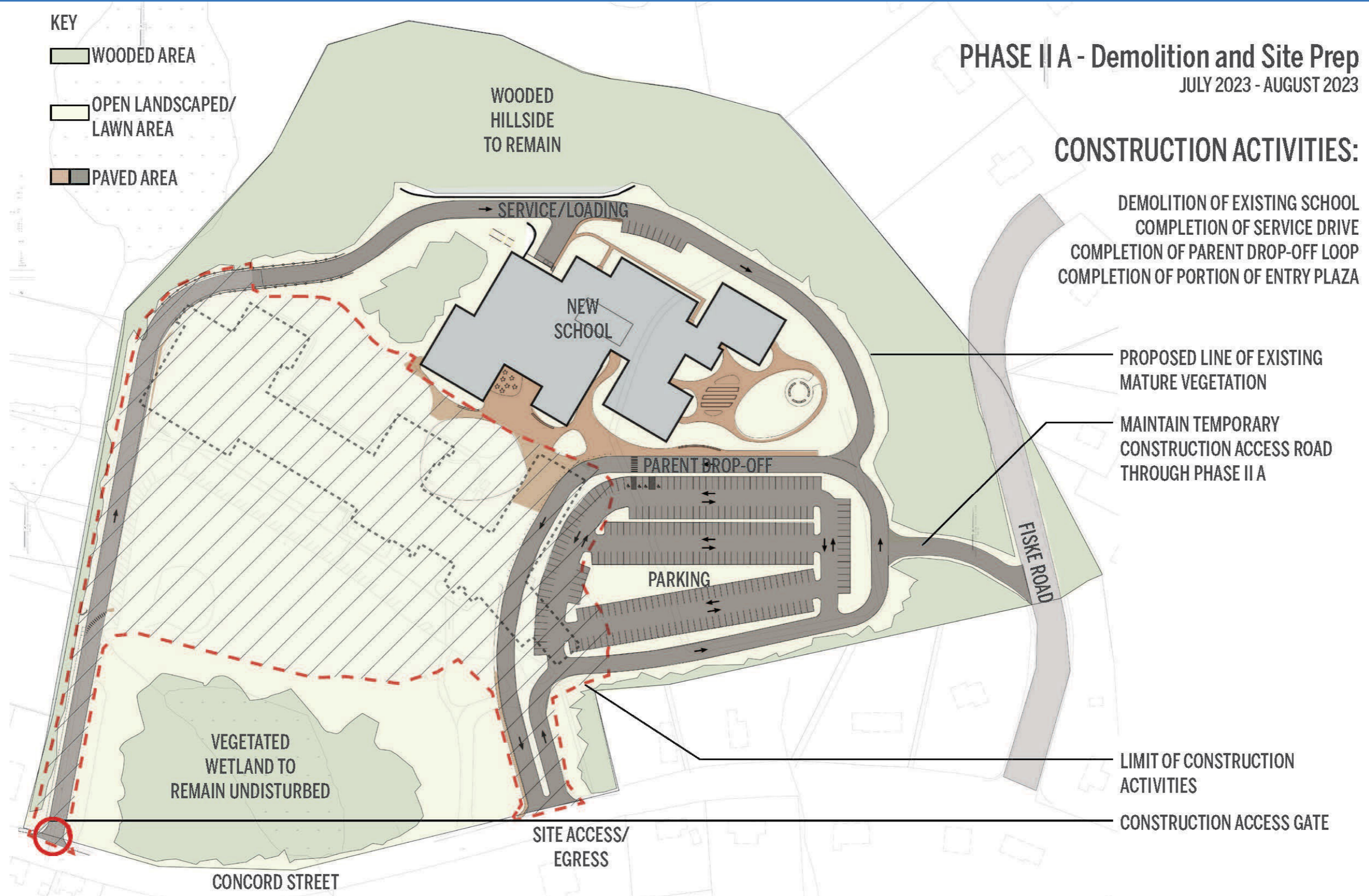
# Existing Aerial Image



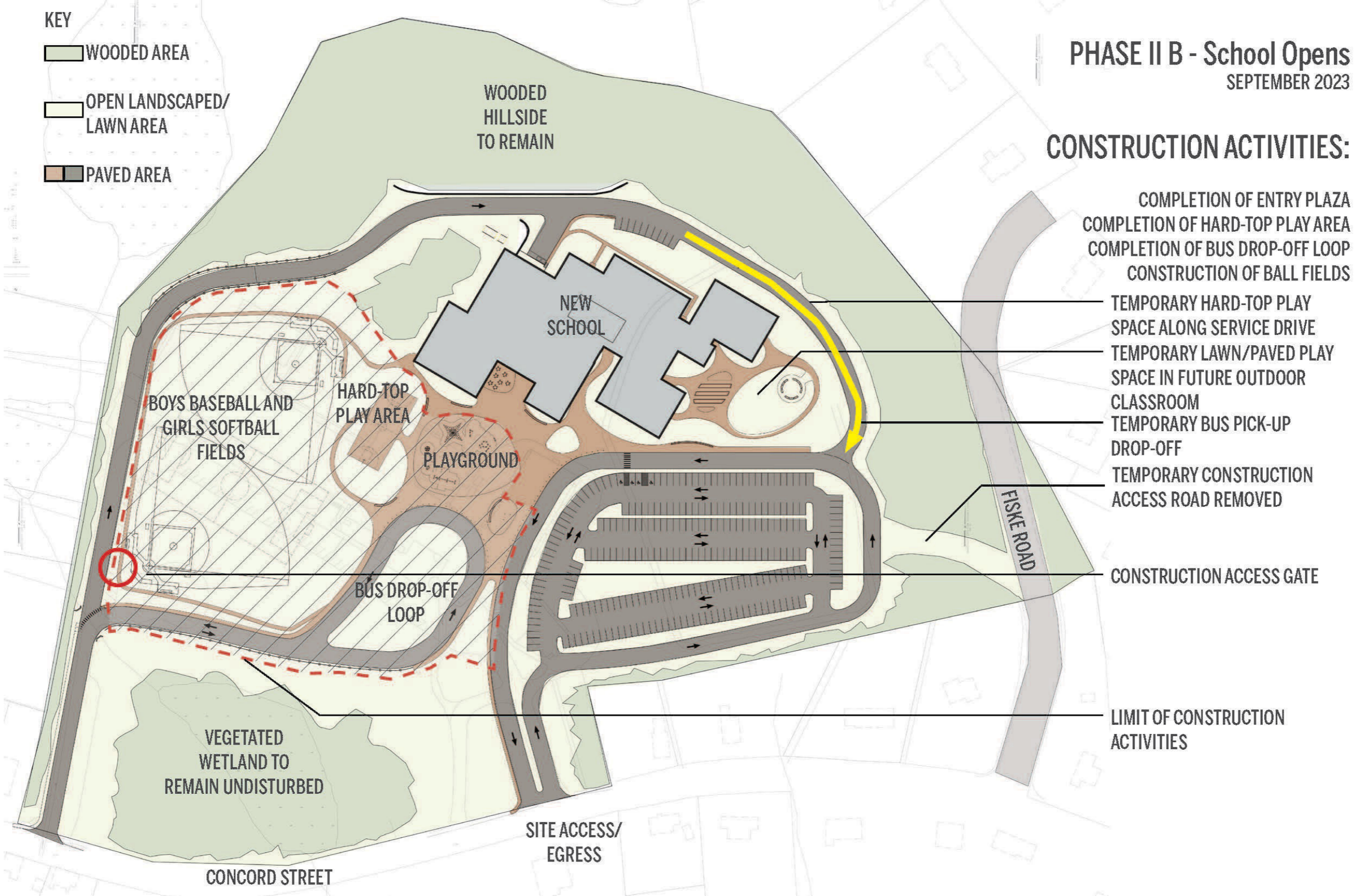
# Phasing Plans



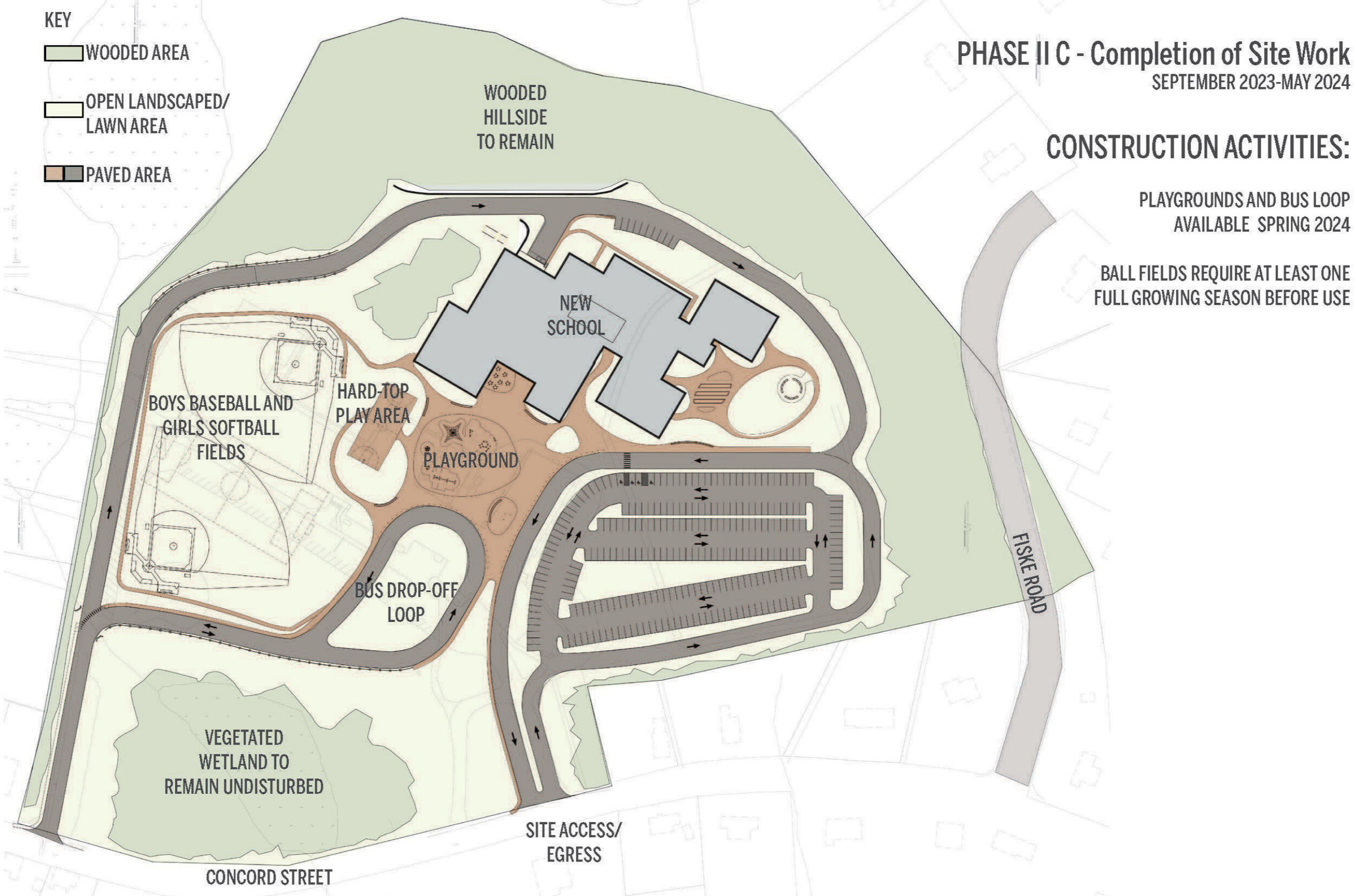
# Phasing Plans



# Phasing Plans



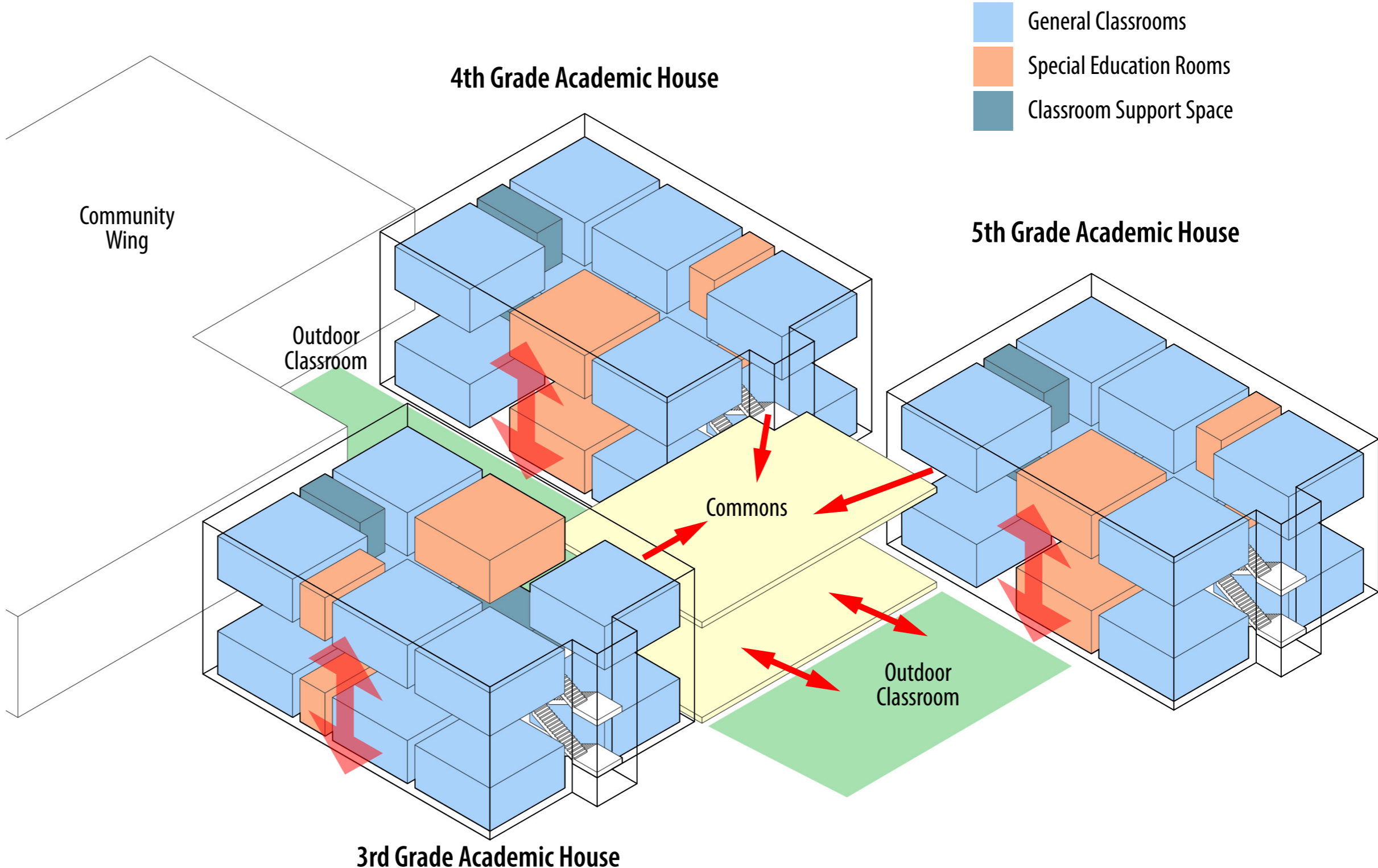
# Phasing Plans



# Building Organization and Floor Plans

# Academic Houses

- Each academic house contains special education rooms, classroom support space, and 10 general classrooms with 5 rooms split between two floors.
- Academic houses group classrooms together taking away the need for long hallways.
- This provides more opportunity for outdoor connections (visual and physical) and increases interaction and collaboration opportunities between the academic houses



# First Floor Plan



A. Three-Pod Configuration provides distinct grade level academies and an “all-school” experience by floor.

B. The commons provides access to the academic houses, enrichment spaces such as the arts and outdoor learning opportunities. This space is envisioned as an active hub supporting team collaboration, gatherings, and casual interactions.

C. The future expansion area provides room for the school to grow while staying within the framework of the new building.

D. The Outdoor Classroom provides natural daylight into the core of the school with visual and physical connections to the Arts, music, wellness and OT/PT. The space is envisioned as hardscape for ease of maintenance.

# Second Floor Plan



LIBRARY



STEM/PROJECT ROOM



LEARNING SPACES

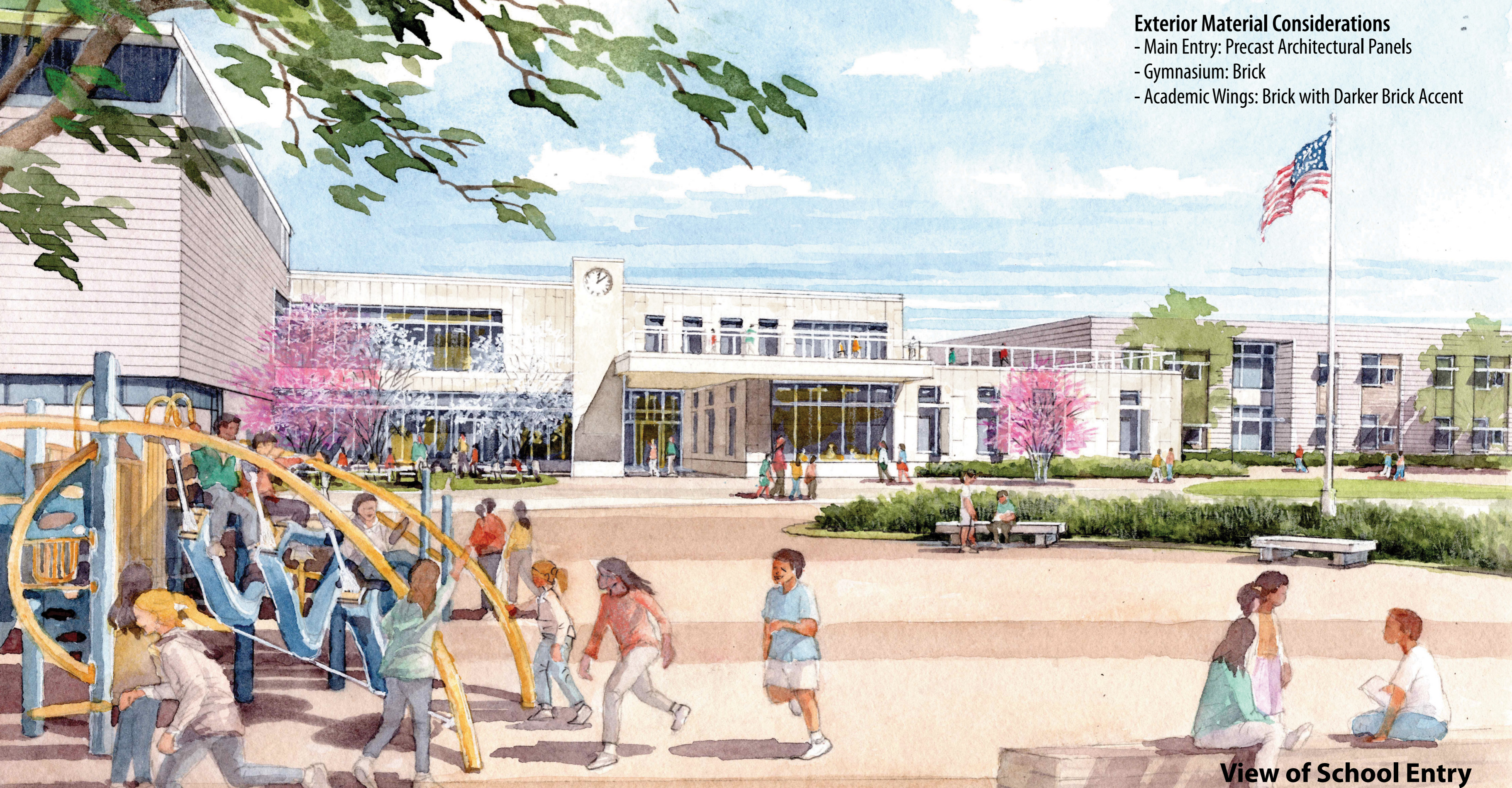


E. Tech Integration Lab adjacent to the commons.

F. Outdoor Learning area expands the learning environment to the exterior. This Outdoor learning area is accessed from the STEM and Media Center. It is southern facing to optimize solar exposure.

G. The Media Center and STEM/Project room are adjacent to one another and provide a space for quiet learning and creative exploration with natural southern light, direct outdoor access, and room to spread out.

- Exterior Material Considerations**
- Main Entry: Precast Architectural Panels
  - Gymnasium: Brick
  - Academic Wings: Brick with Darker Brick Accent



**View of School Entry**

## Exterior Material Considerations

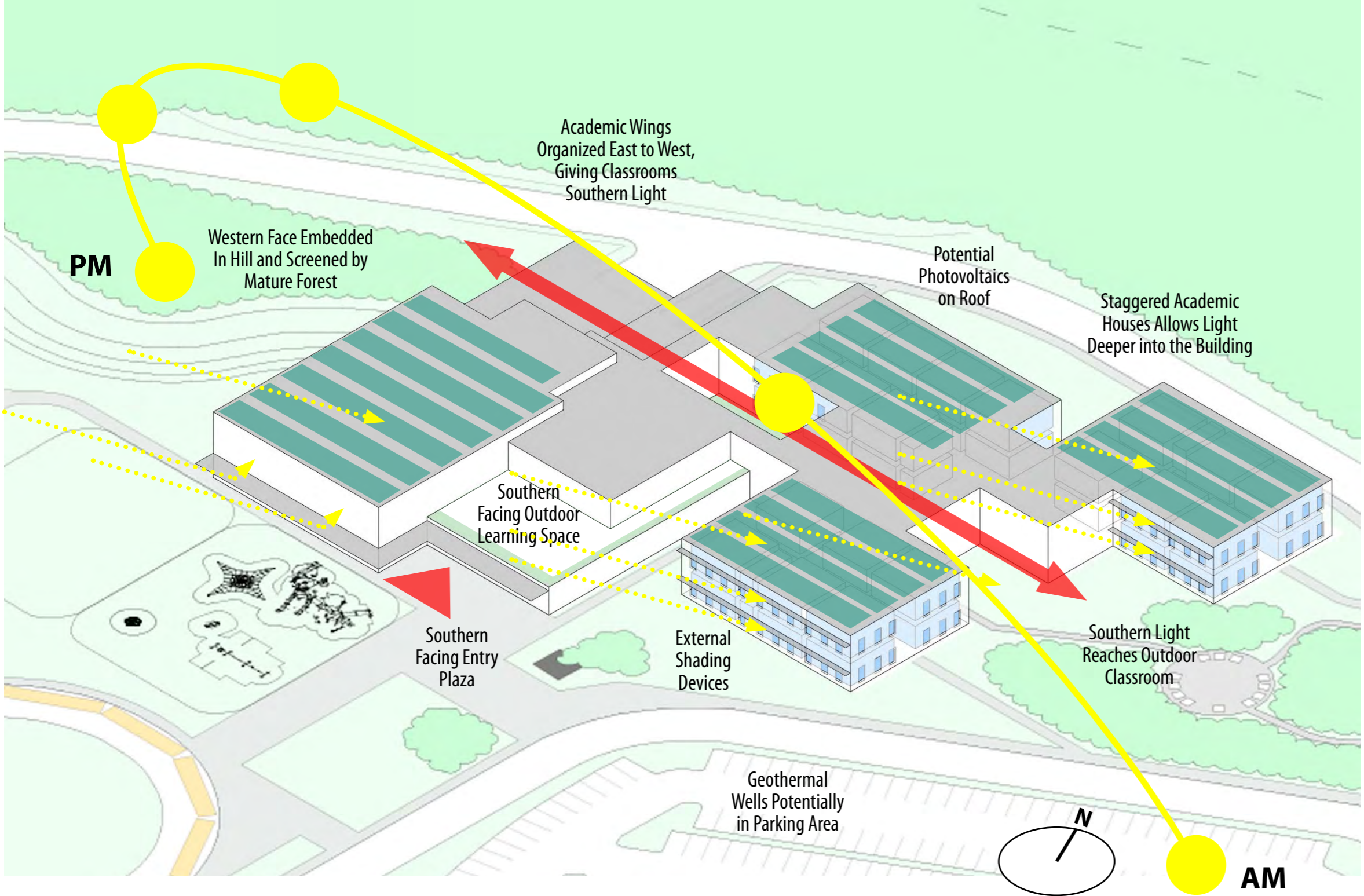
- Enrichment Spaces: Precast Architectural Panels
- Open Commons: Glass with "Wood-Like" Accents
- Academic Wings: Brick with Darker Brick Accent



**View of Academic Houses**

# Sustainability

# Sustainable Design



Path to Net-Zero	
Net-Zero Ready	Net-Zero
Super insulated slab, walls, and roof	Super Insulated slab, walls, and roof
Exterior Mounted Sun Shades	Exterior Mounted Sun Shades
HVAC Geothermal Option 42 Geothermal Wells	HVAC Geothermal Option 42 Geothermal Wells
Add Photovoltaic Panels (PV's) in future or offsite source	Roof Top Photovoltaic Panels (PV's)
	Parking Lot Canopy Photovoltaic Panels (PV's)

The project is currently tracking an EUI of 24.5 kBtu/sf/yr\*

\* EUI value will be updated as the project continues to be developed and refined.

\* PV panels are not a component of the EUI calculations.

# Sustainable Design - Building "Green"

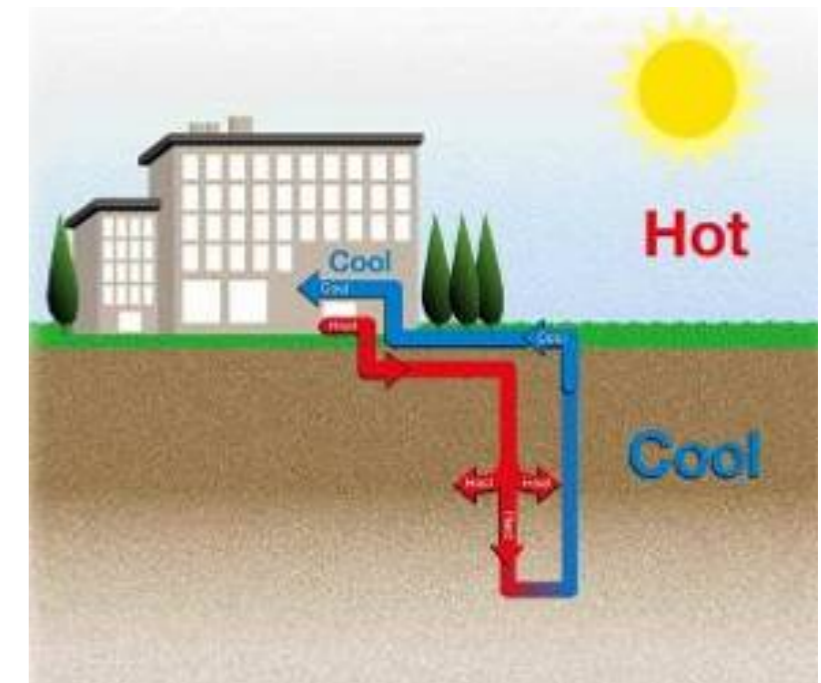
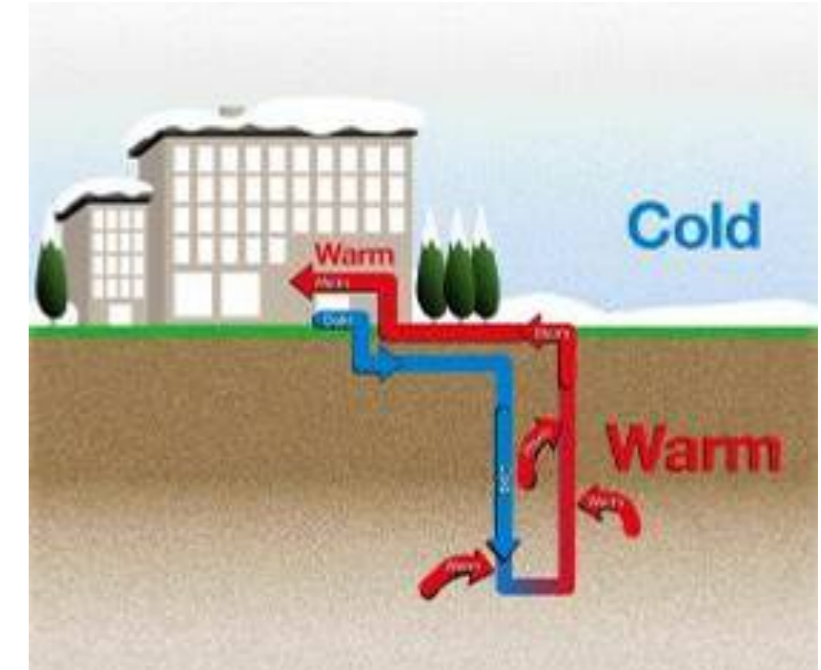
## The New Mindess Will Be a "Green" Building

- Consistent with the resolution adopted at the November 20, 2019 Town Meeting, stating that Ashland will be net-zero by 2040, the new Mindess will be an efficient net-zero ready building.
- Estimated 26% more efficient than if built to typical MSBA specifications (LEED-S or NE-CHPS)
  - As designed modeled to have an energy use intensity (EUI) of 24.5 compared to 33.2
- Estimated 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions than typical MSBA projects
  - Ability to reach net-zero with the addition of solar panels

## How?

- The building is designed so that sections of the building not in use can be closed to reduce energy usage
- The building envelope will be very efficient with increases insulation, triple-pane glazing, and sun shading to reduce solar heat gain. This reduces the amount of energy required to heat or cool the building.
- The project utilizes 42 geothermal wells and heat pumps as the primary method of heating and cooling. This reduces the dependency on natural gas, instead using electricity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and allowing nearly all the energy for the building to be sustainability produced.

\* The investment in the building envelope and geothermal wells, shifting away from a dependency on natural gas, immediately lowers the building's greenhouse gas emissions and enables the site to become net-zero by adding renewable energy sources (solar) in the future.

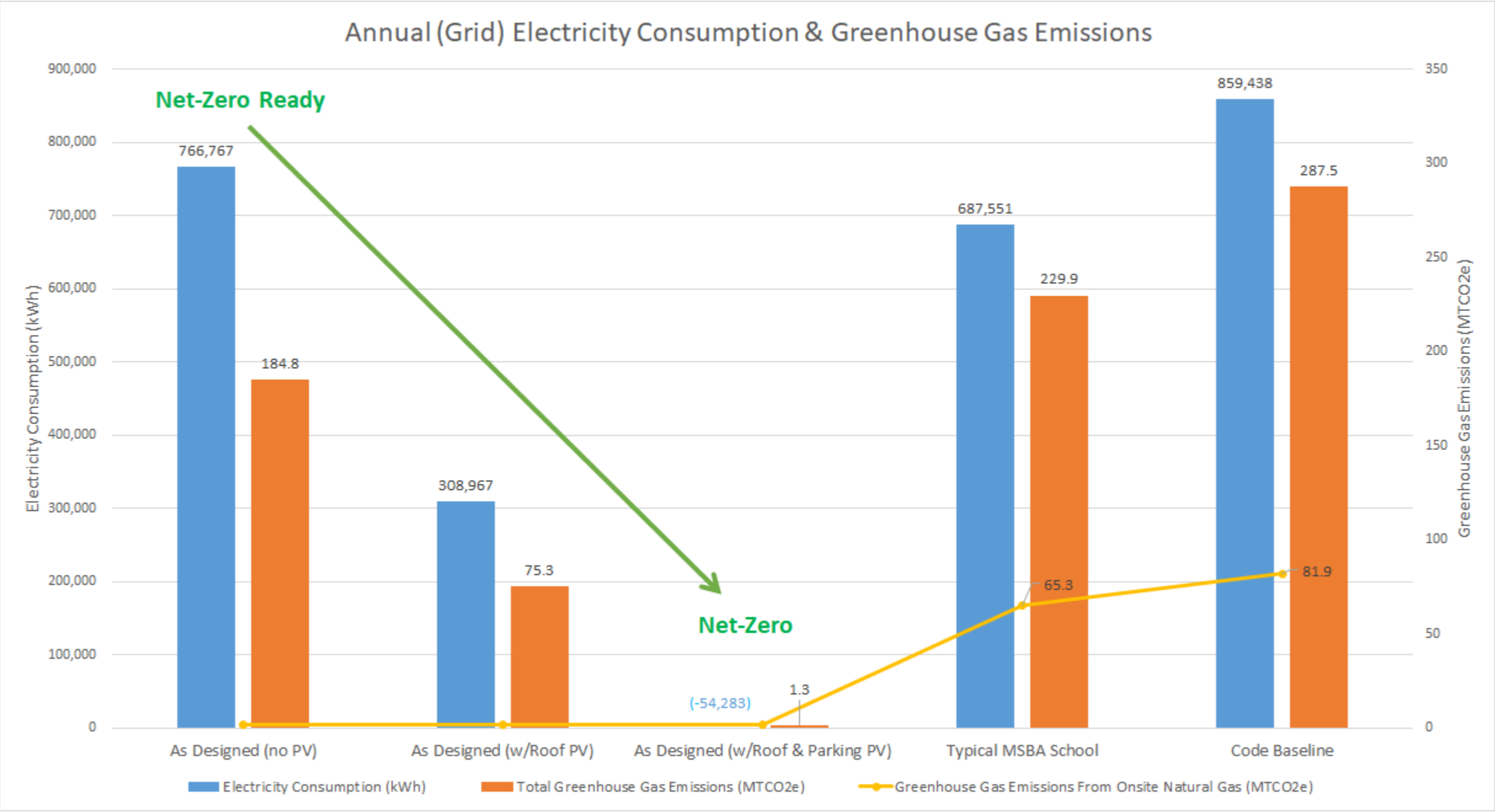


\* Energy consumption based on modeling and estimates from the project's sustainability consultant using industry standards and best practices.

\* Greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas consumption sourced from <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>.

\* Emissions from grid supplied electricity is base on data from Engery Star emissions report (<https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pdf/reference/Emissions.pdf>).

# Sustainable Design - Energy and Emissions



- \* Energy consumption based on modeling and estimates from the project's sustainability consultant using industry standards and best practices.
- \* Greenhouse gas emissions from natural gas consumption sourced from <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>.
- \* Emissions from grid supplied electricity is base on data from Engery Star emissions report (<https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pdf/reference/Emissions.pdf>).

- \* As designed, the new Mindess School would use an estimated 250 therms of natural gas for heating demands, compared to 12,348 for a typical MSBA LEED-S or NE-CHPS building, and 15,472 for current code baseline.
- \* The investment in the building envelope and geothermal wells, shifting away from a dependency on natural gas, immediately lowers the building's greenhouse gas emissions and enables the site to become net-zero by adding renewable energy sources (solar) in the future.

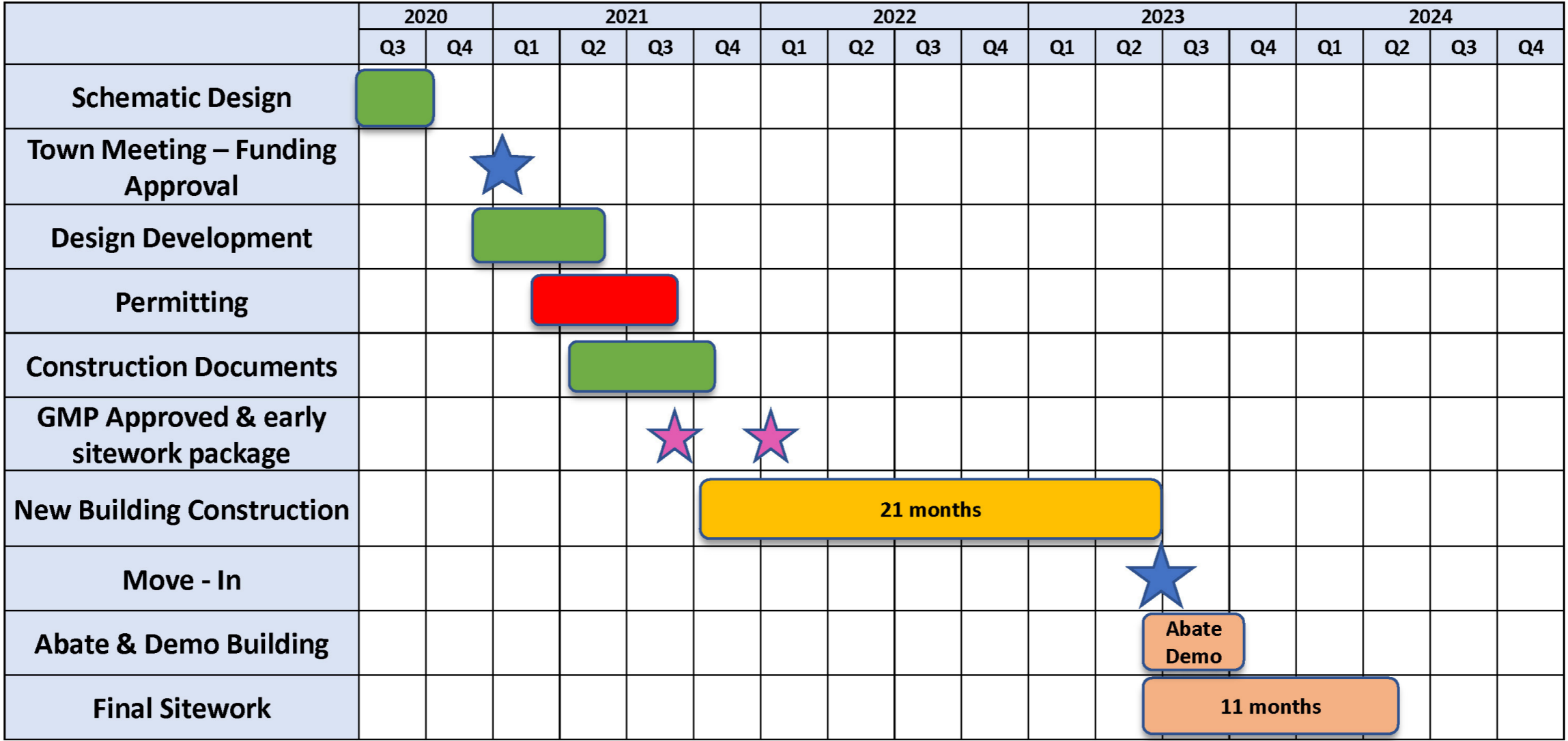
# Exterior Animation



(Click Image for Animation)

# Schedule Review

## New Mindess Elementary School Project Complete Project Schedule





## Key Project Milestone Dates

---

- Start Design Development mid- December 2020
- Finish Permitting and Design early fall 2021
- Break ground with site work October 2021
- Estimated school opening September 2023
- Complete Abatement & Demolition of current building October 2023
- Complete final site work May 2024



## Funding Approval Process

---

- **Wednesday, October 28, 2020 (Completed)**
  - MSBA Board meeting
- **January 23, 2021**
  - Town Meeting vote to authorize borrowing for the project
  - 2/3 majority required to pass
- **January 27, 2021**
  - Town-wide election to vote on a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion
  - Simple majority required to pass

# Budget & Reimbursement Review



## What is the Total Project Budget?

### Project Budget Summary

Description	Cost
Building Construction	\$55,272,000
Site Construction	\$12,453,000
Furniture, Equip. & Technology	\$2,063,000
Design and Consultant Fees	\$6,740,500
Project Management & Clerk of Works	\$2,155,000
Other Administrative Costs	\$1,139,500
Contingencies	\$3,564,000
Project Budget – Fall 2020 Appropriation	<b>\$83,387,000*</b>
Total Project Budget	<b>\$84,387,000</b>
MSBA Maximum Total Facilities Grant	<b>\$26.2 - \$27M**</b>
* Does not include the previously funded \$1.0 Million for the feasibility study	
** Reimbursement subject to actual expenditures, rate is 55.57% of eligible costs	



## MSBA Reimbursement

---

### Ashland's reimbursement percentage

- Effective reimbursement rate for Project after exclusions and caps could be between 32 - 35% of the Total Project Budget
- The final effective reimbursement percentage is dependent on how much of the project budget is spent, bid results, ineligible changes, etc.

### Ashland's Project Specific Reimbursement Points

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • Ashland's Base line reimbursement points                | 52.26%         |
| • Incentive points for energy efficient schools           | + 2.00%        |
| • <u>Incentive points for maintenance score from MSBA</u> | <u>+ 1.31%</u> |
| • <b>Reimbursement rate prior to exclusions</b>           | <b>55.57%</b>  |



## MSBA Reimbursement - Cost Caps / Exclusions

---

Costs that exceed the following caps are ineligible. Typical MSBA projects exceed caps.

- ▶ **Building costs exceeding \$333/SF (not updated in two years)**
- ▶ **Site costs that exceed 8% of the building costs**
- ▶ **Furnishings and Technology Equipment that exceed \$2,400/ student based on approved 635 student enrollment**
- ▶ **Soft Costs exceeding 20% of construction costs (Project is Below)**
- ▶ **OPM costs exceeding 3.5% of construction costs (Project is Below)**
- ▶ **Architect costs exceeding 10% of construction costs (Project is Below)**
- ▶ **Change Orders exceeding 1% of construction cost (to be determined after construction)**



## Program impacts on budget

---

- Program Exclusions
  - 2,000 NSF Larger Gym to match existing (2,000 nsf x 1.49 grossing)
  - Extended day office 400 NSF (400 nsf x 1.49 grossing)
- Program absorbed into Grossing Factor
  - Additional bathrooms for Nurse suite
  - Mothers Room
- Previous Roof Replacement project at Mindess
  - MSBA will pro-rate cost recovery on remaining life of roof asset not fully realized.



## Construction Estimate Cost Drivers

---

- Site Cost Factors
  - Site Acreage 16.6 ac.
  - Topography requiring retaining walls, soil cuts and fills
  - Roadway circulation and parking on site
  - Geothermal Well field
  - Replacing two baseball fields including irrigation
- Net Zero Ready Cost Factors
  - Ground Source Heat Pump Mechanical Systems
  - Increased envelope insulation above stretch code
  - Triple pane glazing to meet more stringent R-values
  - Added Plug load controls above code

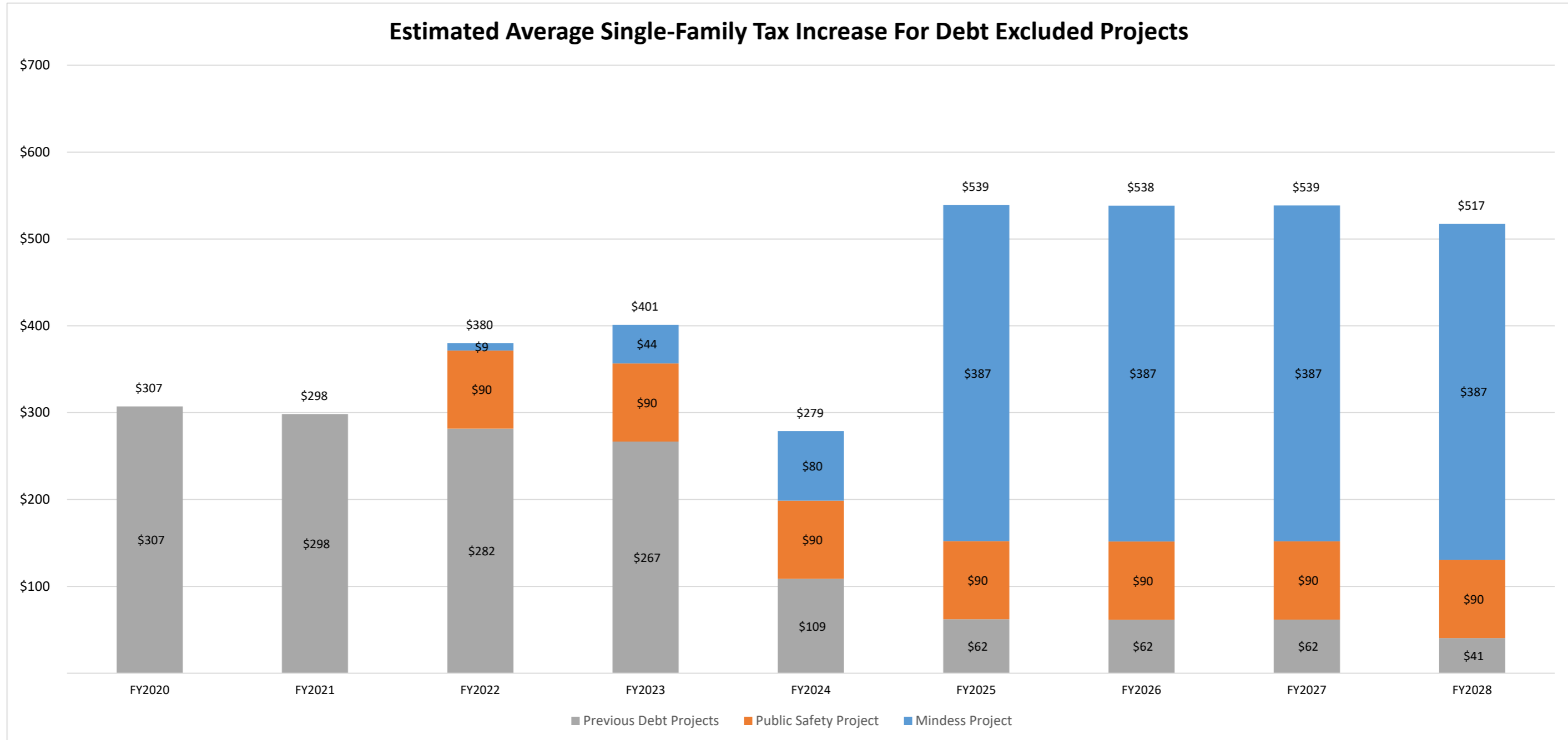
# Budget & Reimbursement Detail by Category

## Mindess School Building Project - Total Project Budget and Funding by Category

Category	Budget	Excluded	Eligible	MSBA	Effective Rate	Description
Feasibility Study (1)	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$555,700	55.57%	Funding for work through Schematic Design
Administrative (2)	\$2,451,333	\$161,323	\$2,290,010	\$1,272,559	51.91%	OPM and other administrative costs
Architectural/Engineering (2)	\$6,802,500	\$192,309	\$6,610,191	\$3,673,283	54.00%	Designer and sub-consultant costs
Construction (3)	\$53,382,049	<b>\$22,146,036</b>	\$31,236,013	\$17,357,852	32.52%	Building construction costs
Pre-Construction Services	\$220,000	\$0	\$220,000	\$122,254	55.57%	CMR pre-construction services
Site Work (4)	\$12,452,834	<b>\$9,461,688</b>	\$2,991,146	\$1,662,180	13.35%	Site costs, including grading, roads, fields, etc.
Demo/Abate (5)	\$1,890,413	\$251,750	\$1,638,663	\$910,605	48.17%	Costs to demolish and abate old building
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment (6)	\$1,079,500	\$317,500	\$762,000	\$423,444	39.23%	Budgeted Per/Student at \$1,700/student
Technology (6)	\$984,250	\$222,250	\$762,000	\$423,444	43.02%	Budgeted Per/Student at \$1,550/student
Miscellaneous	\$560,300	\$120,300	\$440,000	\$244,508	43.64%	Miscellaneous costs (moving, recording, etc.)
MSBA Cost Recovery				<b>(\$375,641)</b>		For previous MSBA roof projects on Mindess
<b>Project Subtotal</b>	<b>\$80,823,179</b>	\$32,873,156	\$47,950,023	<b>\$26,270,187</b>	32.50%	Project Totals without contingencies
Construction Contingency	\$2,912,000	\$2,234,747	\$677,253	\$376,349	12.92%	For unforeseen construction challenges
Owner's Contingency	\$651,821	\$0	\$651,821	\$362,217	55.57%	For unforeseen changes to project scope
<b>Total Maximum Project Budget</b>	<b>\$84,387,000</b>	\$35,107,903	\$49,279,097	<b>\$27,008,753</b>	32.01%	Total Project Budget Items

- (1) Feasibility Study funding previously approved by Town Meeting and ballot vote
- (2) OPM & Designer services pro-rated exclusion for gym space over MSBA template
- (3) Construction costs are capped at \$333/sf, typical MSBA projects far exceed cap
- (4) Site costs are capped at %8 of construction costs, roughly covers building footprint, all other site costs exceed cap
- (5) Hazardous material abatement are categorically excluded from reimbursement
- (6) MSBA caps FFE and Technology participation at \$1,200/student for each
- \* MSBA reimbursement for the Mindess School Building Project is %55.57

# How Much Will My Taxes Go Up?



\* Mindess project assumes interest-only borrowing in FY22 (\$6m), FY23 (\$25m), and FY24 (\$25m) at %1, then 27-year bond of \$56m at 2%

\* Public Safety project assumes \$30.9m 30-year bond at 2% with \$750,000 of debt service offset from general fund and capital budgets

\* Estimates are calculated using level debt service method

Estimated Net Tax Increase FY2021 to FY2025: \$241  
 Average Single-Family Home (Houses and Condos): \$427,163  
 Average Single-Family House: \$471,214  
 Average Single-Family Condo: \$342,978

## Example Tax Impact Scenarios

	Average Condominium	Average Single Family House	New Construction Single Family House
<b>Assessed Value (FY2020)</b>	<b>\$342,978</b>	<b>\$471,214</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>
<b>Estimated Current (FY2021) Property Taxes</b>	\$5,710/year	\$7,844/year	\$10,821/year
<b>Portion of Current Taxes for Previously Excluded Projects</b>	\$240/year	\$329/year	\$454/year
<b>Public Safety Building Tax Impact<sup>1</sup></b>	\$72/year	\$99/year	\$137/year
<b>FY2025 Mindess Building Tax Impact<sup>2</sup></b>	\$311/year	\$427/year	\$589/year
<b>First Year Net Increase for New Building Projects<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$66/year</b>	<b>\$90/year</b>	<b>\$125/year</b>
<b>FY2025 Net Increase for New Building Projects<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$193/year</b>	<b>\$265/year</b>	<b>\$366/year</b>

1 - Public Safety project assumes \$30.9m 30-year bond at 2% with \$750,000 of debt service offset from general fund and capital budgets

2 - Mindess project assumes interest-only borrowing in FY22 (\$6m), FY23 (\$25m), and FY24 (\$25m) at %1, then 27-year bond of \$56m at 2%

3 - Net Increase is based on current (FY2021) amount paid for excluded debt compared with FY2022, the first year of borrowing

4 - Net Increase is based on current (FY2021) amount paid for excluded debt compared with FY2025, when full project costs will be realized

\* Estimates are calculated using level debt service method

Home Valuations Sourced From: <http://epas.csc-ma.us/publicaccess/Pages/AllCommunitySearchParcel.aspx>

## **What is an excluded debt project and why are previous ones shown?**

- A debt exclusion is a mechanism for borrowing money to pay for projects. If approved, the town temporarily increases the tax rate to collect the funds required for the payments of that debt. Because excluded debt is temporarily added to the normal base taxes, and is removed when the debt is paid, the graph shows all the excluded debt projects over time.

## **Why is the full tax impact of the Mindess project not realize until FY2025?**

- The Town will only borrow the money required for each phase of the project. For instance, the money needed in during the 2021 calendar year will only be for design development and the start of site work. Also, the Town will be receiving re-imbusement from the MSBA throughout the project, which delays the need to borrow.

## **Why is the cost of the Public Safety project shown on the chart?**

- The residents will be asked to vote on both projects at the same Town Meeting and on the same ballot. As both projects require debt exclusions and will go before the community at the same time, it is important to provide the community with a holistic view of the tax impacts.

# How can I get the tax increase for my property?

## Determine the Tax Increase for Your Property

- The Town will temporarily raise the tax rate in order to collect the funds needed to service the debt each year until debt is paid.
  - The incremental tax rate for the Mindess Project is estimated to be \$0.9056
- Compute the tax for your property
  - Get the FY2020 assessed value of your home\*, say \$500,000
  - Divide the assessed value by \$1,000 (tax rate is per \$1,000 of value)
  - Multiply by \$0.9056
  - Example:  $\$500,000/\$1,000 = 500 \times \$0.9056 = \$453/\text{year}$
  - The incremental tax rate for the Public Safety Building project is \$0.2108, making the combined incremental tax rate for both projects \$1.1164.

\* FY2020 values can be found using the parcel search link from the Town Assessor's page: <http://epas.csc-ma.us/publicaccess/Pages/AllCommunitySearchParcel.aspx>

# Why Now?

## **While the town is voting to fund the project now, the tax impact will be gradual, with the full impact expected in FY2025**

- The estimated tax impact for the average tax bill is \$9/year in FY2022, \$44/year in FY2023, \$80/year in FY2024, and finally \$387/year in FY2025
- Over that same time, previous projects will be paid off, decreasing the net tax impact

## **Further delaying funding approval, even a few months, would push the opening of a new school back a full year.**

- Site work, currently planned to begin in late 2021, would be pushed to spring 2022
- The demolition of the current school and completion of the front entrance, currently planned for the summer of 2023, would be delayed.

## **Delaying the project schedule is likely to increase the project costs**

- Currently, the project bidding market is very favorable, which could yield significant project savings, but it is unlikely to stay that way
- Once the construction bidding market recovers, typical annual cost escalation of 3-5% would apply. The MSBA will not contribute additional costs for delays, it will be borne by the Town.

**Through the MSBA grant process, the state has committed over \$26 million to this project, and keeping the project on pace will secure that state funding. Any substantial delays to the project need to be approved by the MSBA board.**

# Discussion & Questions

For more information, visit <http://mindesschoolbuildingproject.ashland.k12.ma.us/>

Email questions to [buildingcommittee@ashland.k12.ma.us](mailto:buildingcommittee@ashland.k12.ma.us)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MindessSchoolBuildingProject>