

Update from School Building Rehabilitation Committee

Frequently Asked Questions Re: ECEC and Pre-K-5 Options for Dexter and Greenlodge

Project Details

Process

Finances

Traffic & Permitting

Miscellaneous

Project Details

1. **How and when did this project start?** The School Building Rehabilitation Committee was formed by vote of Town Meeting December 4, 2000, Article 5. It has overseen construction of the Middle School (opened 2006), the Avery Elementary School and High School Athletic Complex (opened 2012). In 2013 the Town submitted a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) seeking its support to replace or renovate the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). MSBA agreed to the Town’s request. In 2013, after working with architects who conducted a preliminary review, SBRC concluded that two concepts should be considered: 1) a stand-alone ECEC, and 2) a combined ECEC/Elementary school. MSBA, School Committee and Finance Committee agreed with this, and Town Meeting approved the warrant article in November 2013. SBRC has been working on this project since Town Meeting approval.

2. **How many options have been reviewed for this project?**

OPTION	SCHOOL	PROJECT TYPE
1	Capen	ECEC Add/Reno
2	Capen	Pre K-5 Add/Reno
3	Dexter	ECEC Add/Reno
4	Dexter	ECEC Add/Reno
5	Greenlodge	Pre K-5 Add/Reno
6	Oakdale	Pre K-5 Add/Reno
7	Riverdale	Pre K-5 Add/Reno
8	Capen	ECEC New
9	Capen	Pre K-5 New
10	Dexter	ECEC New
11	Dexter	Pre K-5 New
12	Greenlodge	Pre K-5 New
13	Oakdale	Pre K-5 New
14	Riverdale	Pre K-5 New

Options 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 13 were eliminated in the first round: the Capen site is inadequate due to elevation changes. Options 4 and 5 were rejected because the cost to build new is only slightly more than the

cost to renovate. Option 7 was eliminated because of the low matrix score, which largely reflected the very tight layout and the concern of getting cars off Needham Street into the drop-off/pick-up queue.

In the second round Options 3, 10 and 12 were selected as the short list. Options 6 and 14 were eliminated because the proposed project would be too tight on the available land. Option 11 was eliminated because if it was built there would be a surplus elementary school, which would be unneeded capacity, and probably result in the closure of one of the existing neighborhood schools.

3. How much will it cost?

Dedham Early Childhood Education Center								
Option Comparative Matrix								
3/2/2015	School Site							
	Dexter School	Oakdale ES	Dexter School	Dexter School	Greenlodge ES	Riverdale ES		
	Option 3 - Add/Reno ECEC	Option 6 - Add/Reno PreK-5	Option 10 - New ECEC	Option 11a - New PreK-5	Option 11b - New PreK-5	Option 12 - New PreK-5	Option 14 - New PreK-5	
CAPITAL COSTS	Option Estimated Cost	\$ 33,421,061	\$ 50,945,570	\$ 35,333,709	\$ 51,416,173	\$ 45,795,997	\$ 52,330,914	\$ 47,303,244
	Dedham share	\$ 19,200,337	\$ 29,879,616	\$ 20,023,844	\$ 28,272,986	\$ 25,409,562	\$ 30,840,199	\$ 27,148,733
	MSBA share	\$ 14,220,724	\$ 21,065,954	\$ 15,309,865	\$ 23,143,187	\$ 20,386,435	\$ 21,490,714	\$ 20,154,511
	Cost per square foot (includes costs for swing space where applicable)	\$ 505	\$ 513	\$ 551	\$ 508	\$ 520	\$ 566	\$ 537
	SF Cost for swing space	No swing space required	\$ 41	No swing space required	No swing space required	No swing space required	\$ 42	\$ 38
	Cost per pupil	\$ 107,810	\$ 76,038	\$ 113,980	\$ 76,741	\$ 84,807	\$ 87,951	\$ 87,599

- 4. How will it affect my taxes?** The projects will not require debt exclusions. Our plan is to pay for this project by bonding (borrowing) the money and, subject to Town Meeting approval, to pay back that bond using the money collected by the meals and hotel taxes which are deposited in the Robin Reyes Major Capital Facilities Stabilization Fund, as was explained to Special Town Meeting in May 2014. This fund was created in late 2009 at a Special Town Meeting; since then the Town has been depositing revenue from local option hotel and meals taxes into the fund. All transfers in and out of the Robin Reyes Fund must be approved by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.

Based on financial projections we can demonstrate that the Town can borrow the approximately \$20 million needed for the Dexter options and pay for it entirely from the meals and hotel taxes. The \$30 million needed for the Greenlodge option is proposed to come from the meals and hotel taxes, supplemented by funds freed up when the Town pays down its unfunded pension liability forecasted in 2024. This proposal has not yet been vetted by the Finance Committee.

5. **How large are the existing school buildings and how much space does Massachusetts School Building Authority recommend?**

School	Year Built	MSBA Agreed Enrollment	Lot Size	Current Sq. Ft.	Recommended Sq Ft
High School	1959	725 (target)	11.4	251,043	155,166
Middle School	2006	653 (target)	8.2	130,000	113,381
Avery	2012	310	~7	60,000	55,428
Greenlodge	1955	285	16.7	40,373	51,300
Oakdale	1902	360	6.9	56,256	62,280
Riverdale	1920	230	3.1	44,682	41,400
ECEC/Capen	1931	310	4.3	30,813	55,438
Dexter	1961	310	29.2	25,603	55,438

6. **Are there site plans available that shows the various options?** The various plans can be found on the Town website at <http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=27426>

7. **How will the shared spaces in the combo options be used?** If a consolidated PreK-5 Option is selected, it is not the design intent to “share “any educational spaces between the ECEC students and the Grades 1-5 students with the exception of the OT/PT space and some custodial spaces. There is a possibility that is being studied to possibly provide shared gymnasium space.

8. **How can the town afford these options, especially the more expensive Greenlodge/ECEC combo?** The cost to build the 595 student Pre K – 5 school in Greenlodge is estimated at \$50.3mm, which is about \$84,500 per seat. The cost to build a new 310 student stand-alone ECEC is estimated at \$35.3 million. This is about \$114,000 per “seat”. For an “apples-to-apples” comparison we must add to the cost of the standalone ECEC the cost of building a second school with an enrollment of about 300 students which is \$34 million. Therefore the cost of two standalone schools (of ~300 students each) is \$69 million, compared to \$50.3 million for the Greenlodge School, a difference of ~\$19 million.

9. **Will taxes go up?** Re taxes – please see question 4.

10. **Does the proposed Greenlodge/ECEC option violate the current education model?** The current model clusters pre-k and kindergarten students together so that the special education staff servicing our youngest students can be concentrated in one building, and so that a uniform curriculum can be better maintained. The Greenlodge option accomplishes this. The education consulting firm assigned to the project, DeJong Richter, concludes there is no educational detriment, but rather there are possible teaching opportunities in having the ECEC and Elementary schools housed in the same building.

11. **How does the Greenlodge project promote "fiscal responsibility?"** The cost to design, build and fit out the Greenlodge option (to house 595 students) is approximately \$19 million less than building 2

separate schools with the same capacity. In addition, the ongoing operating costs for one building with 600 students are lower than for two buildings each of which has 300 students.

12. **Has the State or MSBA already accepted a stand-alone option for the Capen?** MSBA has not accepted a stand-alone option for Capen. As explained in question 1, the SBRC is evaluating the options per the warrant article approved at November 2013 Town Meeting, the language for which was agreed to by the MSBA.
13. **How do we justify fixing a building that was last on the list of elementary schools to replace?** Of the three remaining old elementary schools, Greenlodge with 16.7 acres of land is the best equipped to site a combined ECEC/Elementary school. Only through a combined facility can the Town save \$19 million in construction costs; realize the operating budget savings of heating and maintaining 30,000 sq ft less of building space; move 600 students, not just 300, into an excellent educational facility now from antiquated ones; and leverage the maximum amount of grant money from the state for this current project. Like the other two old elementary schools, the Greenlodge is undersized by state educational standards. With an age of 60 years, Greenlodge may be young by Dedham school building standards, but it is within the normal school building replacement cycle of 50-75 years.
14. **How many classrooms will be present in both plans-stand alone and combo?** In the stand alone ECEC options as well as the consolidated PreK-5 options, there will be 16 classrooms for the ECEC (6 for Pre-K and 10 for K). Additionally, in the Consolidated Option at Greenlodge there will be 15 classrooms for Grades 1 through 5, or 3 classrooms per grade.
15. **How will 600 kids get to eat in the state mandated two-hours for lunch?** The cafeterias and kitchens will be designed and sized as per MSBA square footage guidelines to allow for a minimum of 2 seatings and a maximum of 3 seatings.
16. **Where will the teams that use the Greenlodge space for practice hold their practices?** TBD
17. **What is the timeline and next steps for this project?** The next submission to MSBA is the Preferred Option where a single preferred option will be submitted to MSBA for consideration to develop the design deeper. The deadline for that submission is June 11th. The SBRC and School Committee are required to have a majority of members in support for the submission to be sent to the MSBA. The SBRC is anticipating receiving a Project Funding Agreement (PFA) from MSBA at their January 27, 2016 Board hearing. The Town of Dedham will then have 120 days to return a positive vote from Town Meeting that acknowledges and accepts the PFA from MSBA. Upon approval, the construction documents and bidding would follow with an anticipated start of construction possibly around the beginning of 2017 with an anticipated construction period of 18-24 months depending on the Option that is selected.

18. **The Master Plan states the loss of open space and green space should be avoided. How will the plan (for Greenlodge) impact the playing fields?** Although the fields in their present location could be lost, they will be replaced in a different location on the site.
19. **What plans are there to preserve the privacy of the abutters?**
Visual buffers or planted areas will be preserved or installed, after consultation with neighbors.
20. **What outdoor space will the Greenlodge option have?**
It will have 2 playgrounds for ECEC and 1 playground for elementary. Options for providing baseball fields and open field for youth soccer, similar to the current fields are being reviewed.
21. **There is a walking path leading from Ledgewood Road to the school. Will it be impacted?**
No, it will not. Current plans do not call for elimination of the path.
22. **Will swing space include space for recess and before and after school programs?**
There will be no loss in recess, programs or access. The District will pay transportation costs.
23. **Is cost of swing space included in the estimates?**
Yes, it is. It ranges from \$3.8 million to \$4.3 million, depending on the option. If Dexter or Capen is used as swing space the investment will also allow that building to be potentially used as swing space when the next school project is considered.
24. **The trash dumpsters (for the Greenlodge option) are close to the woods. How will they be handled?**
The Loading dock will have a dumpster. Town bylaws control the siting of the dumpster and how frequently it is emptied. In addition, the School Department and Town have adopted a recycling program which, over the next three years, will substantially reduce waste. The program includes composting done off-site and greater amounts of reusable materials.
25. **Instead of Greenlodge students being sent to Dexter instead of can Greenlodge students use Capen as swing space?**
The architects and project manager have reviewed this suggestion. They agree that Greenlodge students can use Capen as a swing space.
26. **Will there be additional traffic studies to include a larger view of the neighborhood? What streets were already studied and what streets will be added to future studies?**
These streets were studied: Greenlodge, Sprague and Stoughton Road and Rte. 109. These streets will be part of future studies: Vincent, Stoughton, and Ledgewood.
27. **During the demolition/construction phase of the project what steps will be taken to keep neighbors advised as to the schedule and where to direct questions/concerns?**
During the previous projects the SBRC has generally met weekly, to review progress with the Contractor and Project Manager. These are posted meetings and time is scheduled for questions and concerns, not only from the SBRC but from the public. In addition, the Project Manager and their staff

have supplied contact information to the area residents so that immediate questions/concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

28. Is there a way to keep more of the green space with the Greenlodge/ECEC option?

KBA, the project architects, have looked at two possibilities to reduce the amount of paving. One possibility that was reviewed included stacking the elementary classroom spaces above the ECEC classroom spaces. This was done as an attempt to reduce the footprint. The other possibility reduces the amount of paved access roadways compared to the original Option 12.

Process

29. This project should have been more widely publicized. Why wasn't it?

We were wrong to wait as long as we did to more widely publicize the discussions. We apologize. We are committed to a better level of outreach, and we hope this document is seen as part of a good-faith effort.

30. What is the role of the Massachusetts School Building Authority? The MSBA is a full partner throughout the entire process. As a grant funding agency they reimburse the Town for up to 47% of eligible expenses. MSBA has a well-defined process with regular in-depth reviews of every project they participate in. Massachusetts taxpayers expect a high level of control over money disbursed by the MSBA.

31. If Town Meeting approves this project, what is the process following that? This project would be subject to review by the Planning Board and Conservation Committee, as well as inspections by all applicable inspectors, including Building, Fire, Electrical and Plumbing. The School Building Rehabilitation Committee (SBRCC) will take responsibility for the project, as it did for the Middle School, the Avery Elementary School and the High School Athletic Complex, if Town Meeting approves the project.

32. Shouldn't Town Meeting have given its approval before the Town entered into this process with the MSBA? Town Meeting gave its approval in November, 2013. This vote was preceded by unanimous votes by SBRC, School Committee and Finance Committee. The warrant article instructed the SBRC to consider the following sites for a stand-alone ECEC or combined ECEC – Elementary School : at Dexter, Riverdale, Oakdale and Greenlodge.

33. Is the Town under a deadline to make a decision? The timetable is determined by the MSBA. The next key date is June 11, when we are required to submit a preferred schematic design to MSBA.

34. What is the position of the School Committee? Upon a vote for the preferred Option by the SBRC, it is required that the School committee vote on whether to authorize the preferred option package, as voted by the SBRC, be submitted to MSBA. The MSBA requires a majority vote by both committees is support of the preferred option package.

35. **Will voters have a chance to vote on this project?** Because the project does not require any additional property taxes to purchase or fit out the property in excess of what is permitted under the Town's levy limit (as established by Proposition 2 ½, so-called), Massachusetts law and the Town Charter give Town Meeting the necessary authority to make this decision. Residents can contact their Town Meeting representatives to make their views known, or be in touch with Town officials or staff for such purposes. Taxpayers may also participate in Town Meeting for the purpose of expressing their views, even though they cannot vote. Be aware, however, that the only questions that can be put to the voters of the Town at an election are those specifically authorized by statute. There is no statute allowing a binding question to be placed on the ballot with respect to whether the voters generally support a project. In accordance with the provisions of G.L. c.53, §18A, a non-binding public policy question can appear on the ballot but only at an Annual Town Election. As set forth in that statute, there are three ways for such a question to appear on an Annual Town Election ballot: vote of an Annual Town Meeting; vote of the Board of Selectmen; or by petition. As a reminder in recent years Town Meeting has approved an investment of \$6.4 million for the Dedham Square Improvement Project, authorized \$12 million to upgrade energy systems in multiple buildings around town and \$28 million for the municipal campus project. None of these projects required any additional taxes beyond the normal property tax. As projected none of the three options will require additional taxes beyond the normal property tax.
36. **If this is approved, when would the buildings be ready for occupancy?** Options 3 and 10 (Dexter) could be ready for the fall of 2018. Our best estimate is that Option 12 (Greenlodge) would open in the fall of 2018 or the beginning of 2019.
37. **There is water behind some homes on Ledgewood Road, to the far right of the school property. Are these wetlands?** An environmental consulting firm inspected the property in late April. Its report will be available shortly. The next step includes the Dedham Conservation Commission, which is the body authorized to agree with the findings and delineation of whether and where a wetlands exist. Please note that regardless of the determination the project is required to contain drainage on site (this applies to both Dexter and Greenlodge sites). If you would like more information about wetlands please call the Conservation Office at 781-751-9210.

Finances

38. **How much will it cost?** See question 3 above.
39. **What percentage of the projects will be reimbursed by the state?**
The MSBA is a full partner throughout the entire process. As a grant funding agency they reimburse the Town for up to 47% of eligible expenses. Most costs, but not all, are reimbursable. The latest estimates of the State's reimbursement can be found in the table in Question 3 above.
40. **How will this project be financed?** Our plan is to pay for this project by bonding (borrowing) the money and, subject to Town Meeting approval, to pay back that bond using the money collected by the meals and hotel taxes which are deposited in the Robin Reyes Major Capital Facilities Stabilization Fund, as was explained to Special Town Meeting last November. This fund was created in late 2009 at a Special

Town Meeting; since then the Town has been depositing revenue from local option hotel and meals taxes into the fund. All transfers in and out of the Robin Reyes Fund must be approved by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.

Based on financial projections we can demonstrate that the Town can borrow the approximately \$20 million needed for the Dexter options and pay for it entirely from the meals and hotel taxes. The \$30 million needed for the Greenlodge option is proposed to come from the meals and hotel taxes, supplemented by funds freed up when the Town pays down its unfunded pension liability forecasted in 2024. This proposal has not yet been vetted by the Finance Committee.

An appendix with more information on project financing will be available by May 7.

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41. **Are there grants available for energy effectiveness?** The local utility company, EverSource, provides grants to support investments in energy efficiency. We do not have sufficient details to provide any estimates at this time.

Traffic & Permitting

42. **What impact will this project have on Greenlodge traffic?**

Current ECEC student-related traffic: about 155 cars and 3 buses arrive each morning to drop off Pre-K and K children. The reverse happens each afternoon. Additionally mid-day about 40 - 50 cars arrive and depart. Staff account for about 40-45 cars each morning and afternoon. Please note that this traffic is staggered morning, mid-day and afternoon.

43. **Will drop-off and pick-up queues be improved?**

The goal is to have sufficient traffic queues on the sites (similar to the Middle School and Avery) to mitigate, if not eliminate, back-up onto the street. The traffic engineers observed drop-off and pick-up at all elementary schools. The data specific to ECEC/Capen and Greenlodge was used to design the access roads for Options 3, 10 and 12.

44. **How will this project be reviewed and permitted?** It is expected that the project will require a site plan review and approval process by the Planning Board, which may include a traffic study, parking analysis and surveys for sidewalks. Additionally it is expected that Dexter will require wetlands permits and the Greenlodge site may require wetlands permits.

45. **How will the Town conduct traffic enforcement?**

When you have traffic concerns, you are encouraged to call the police and state your concerns. As part of their regular duties they deploy officers to traffic control/enforcement duty. Call them at 781-751-9300 and ask for Traffic Dept. If it goes to voice mail leave a message with your information and someone will call you back.

As part of the design process the architect and engineers evaluate the road layout and may propose changes to conform to the latest standards, which are intended to improve overall safety.

Miscellaneous

46. **When Town Meeting votes on this project, does it require a simple majority or a two-thirds vote?** The vote will include authorization to borrow the money needed for the project, and therefore will require a two-thirds majority. Appropriation of funds from the Robin Reyes Major Capital Facilities Stabilization Fund to pay for the debt service requires a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.

47. **How does this fit with the SBRC priorities published in earlier master plan updates?** The 2008 Master Plan update established the following sequence: Avery, Dexter, Oakdale, Riverdale, then Greenlodge.

48. **Are demolition costs included in cost estimates?** Yes, demolition costs are included in the cost estimates.
49. **Will there be sufficient parking and where will it be located?** The architect presented a preliminary parking plan (for Option 12) with 123 parking spaces. During a typical workday about 100 staff need a place to park. This leaves about 23 spaces for people coming and going to the school.
50. **How was the interest rate on the borrowing selected?** The assumed interest rate was provided by Uni-Bank, the Town's Financial Advisor. They recommended 4.00% be used for a AAA-rated municipal bond with a 30-year term.
51. **If swing space is used it may require modular classrooms. Will they include bathrooms?**
No, they will not. The modular units are physically connected to the main building, so when a student leaves the unit they will not be walking outside but instead through an enclosed space into the main building.
52. **Why don't we just redistrict to reduce overcrowding in the elementary schools?**
Compared to MSBA guidelines all 4 elementary schools are undersized, so moving students out of one school makes the space tighter in another.
53. **What is the total cost of the project – principal plus interest?** **This information will be provided May 7.**
54. **How can I keep up to date with the latest information on this project?** Visit the town's web page at <http://www.dedham-ma.gov/index.cfm?pid=12476> for the latest information. You may also call the Town Manager's office at 781-751-9000.

Information contained in these FAQ's reflects the latest the School Building Rehabilitation Committee has reviewed, as of the date in the footer. Contents will change periodically as new questions are added, or when ne information becomes available.