

Wellesley School Committee  
North 40 Committee Report  
As of August 25, 2014

**BACKGROUND**

The North 40 committee was formed by the Board of Selectmen and is charged with recommending whether the acquisition of the property should be pursued for the development of municipal uses and purposes.

The committee is composed of representatives from the following town boards of which each board will have one (1) vote, regardless of the number of representatives:

- Selectmen (2 reps)
- School Committee (2)
- Planning Board (2)
- CPC (1)
- Board of Public Works (1)
- Recreation (1)
- Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (1)
- Natural Resources Commission (1)

Additionally, two (2) representatives from the neighborhood were appointed. One representative of the Woodlands/Generals neighborhood, one representative from the Weston Road neighborhood each having an individual vote.

The selectmen also requested participation of the following town staff to the committee:

- Executive Director
- Selectmen Staff
- Planning Director
- DPW Director
- Town Engineer
- Superintendent of Schools
- Deputy Chief of Police

**PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

In preparation of a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, the North 40 Committee has asked each board to answer two questions:

1. Is there value to your department if the town were to purchase the North 40? If so, give us your vision.
2. What would be the impact on your department's operation if the North 40 were to be purchased by a private developer?

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**PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT**

To answer the questions on behalf of the School Committee and school administration, KC Kato and Patti Quigley used the following resources to gather information:

The School Facilities Committee (SFC)  
Symmes Maini & McKee Associates (SMMA)  
Brian DuPont – manager of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS)  
Judy Belliveau – Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations  
Meghan Jop – Deputy Director of General Government Services  
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

**ASSUMPTIONS MADE FOR THIS REPORT:**

- Only considered current school property and the North 40 property
- Only a high level analysis was performed (detailed analysis would be performed when a decision is made but is unnecessary at this time)
- The North 40 land conditions are found to be safe and suitable for children and their educational needs
- The town finds a suitable solution to the traffic impact
- .78 students/house sale between Nov'09 and Oct'13 for typical development
  - 61.1% K-5
  - 18.0% MS
  - 21.0% HS
- 0.84 students/household (K-12) for 40B (affordable housing) development
  - 51.3% K-5
  - 19.6% MS
  - 24.1% HS
- 10% of Wellesley students attend private schools
- Cost per student FY13: \$17,149 (DESE K-12)

**QUESTION ONE**

**Is there value to the school department (WPS) if the town were to purchase the North 40? If so, give us your vision.**

In short, YES, there is value to the WPS in the purchase the North 40 property.

An SMMA study evaluated all WPS buildings and found 3 of Wellesley's elementary schools will require significant renovations or replacement over the next 5-7 years. If the North 40 parcel were available, the land suitable and a reasonable traffic plan

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possible it could potentially be a wonderful site for a school. A new school with 4 or 5 sections per grade requires approximately 12 acres of land to support a building, adequate parking, a playground and a multipurpose field. The remainder of the North 40 would be available for alternative uses such as recreation, open space (trails and parks), community gardens, housing, etc.

The value of building on the North 40 site is less economically quantifiable but would have a significant impact on the students, teachers, parents, administration and the town as a whole.

Some of the considerations include:

- Enabling the town to build on an open site, free of the challenges of building next to an in-use building
- Less disruption to the town and students during construction
- Ability to develop an optimal building layout and site circulation plan
- No swing space needed for the long term plan

See attachment A and B for more details on the analysis by the SFC

If an alternative open site were to become available for a school, especially one that is better situated for distribution of students, has less traffic issues and fewer constraints, the SFC recommends the town consider it for a school site. Having any open space site, which currently does not house an in-use school, provides the same value as the North 40 property to the schools.

## **QUESTION TWO**

**What would be the impact to WPS if the North 40 were to be purchased by a private developer?**

If a private developer purchases the North 40 and the development does not add students (e.g. senior housing), WPS can support the existing students on two of our current sites. However, further study is needed to determine the exact school configuration - replacement or renovation and which site. The SFC has evaluated the Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham sites and, although rough capital cost estimates are available, it is still too preliminary in the discussion to know exactly which sites would be used and which sites would be closed. This discussion requires greater analysis and community input.

If a private developer purchases the North 40 and the development does add students, then the enrollment and facilities capacity data would need to be revisited. It is likely the Town would need to replace and/or renovate and/or enlarge all three sites - Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham.

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For a typical development, based on town zoning regulations, the North 40 site could fit up to 100 residential houses of approximately 3600 square feet (3-4 bedroom) each. We estimate 70 students could be added to the WPS at cost of \$1,200,430 per year for the town (no inflation impact).

For a 40B, non-senior housing, development, the North 40 could fit up to 300 residential units. We estimate 252 students could be added to the WPS at a cost of \$4,321,548 per year for the town (no inflation impact).

These costs are the operating cost to the schools and do not include the SFC capital cost estimates.

See Attachment C for more details on the analysis by GIS

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**ATTACHMENT A – SFC AUGUST 6, 2014 MEETING REPORT**

To: The School Facilities Committee  
From: KC Kato, SFC Chair

***If the Town were to purchase the North 40, given the need to replace and/or renovate 3 existing schools, the SFC recommends that we consider the N40 for a new school site.***

- The construction costs of a new building on the N40 or building a new building on the Hardy site are quite similar. A N40 school project would require the inclusion of utilities and roads not currently in place.
- The value of building on the North 40 site is less economically quantifiable but is significant.
  - It would enable the town to build on an open site, free of the challenges of building next to an in-use building.
  - Less disruption to the town and students during construction.
  - Ability to develop an optimal building lay-out and site circulation plan.
  - No swing space needed for the long term plan.
- Any school configuration requires further study in the following areas:
  - Traffic, impact on site, impact to neighborhood and surrounding roads
  - Location of students - where might the redistricted lines be? Is there enough students in the nearby geography to support a school?  
(currently, the high density of students is in the NW and W part of Wellesley)
  - And then which school(s) would remain and which school(s) would close? Given the number of students, the geography of those students and the roadway infrastructure, how might this drive the decision?

***If an alternative open site were to become available for a school, especially one that is better situated, has less traffic issues and fewer constraints, the SFC recommends we consider it for a school site.*** Having any open space site, which currently does not house an in-use school, provides the same value as the N40 to the schools.

***If the Town was to not purchase the N40 and there was NOT development, which added students (e.g., senior housing), the SFC believes we can support the existing students on two of our current sites.*** However, it recommends further study to determine the exact schools configuration; replacement and/or renovation and on which site or sites. The SFC has evaluated the Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham sites. And although we do have rough cost estimates, it is still too preliminary to know exactly which sites we would use and which sites we would close. This

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discussion requires greater analysis and community input.

***If the Town was to not purchase the N40 and it was developed with housing which added students, then the enrollment and facilities capacity data would need to be revisited. It is likely we would need to replace and/or renovate and/or enlarge all three sites - Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham.***

***There are several options of size and combination of schools that could meet the needs of the Wellesley Public Schools.***

Attached are rough cost estimates for various schools. In reviewing the cost estimates, please note the following:

- Any school configuration requires further study in the following areas:
  - ☐ Traffic, impact on site, impact to neighborhood and surrounding roads
  - ☐ # of students and geographic distribution -- Location of students - where might the redistricted lines be? Are there enough students in the nearby geography to support a school? (Currently, the highest density of students is in the NW and W part of Wellesley.)
- Cropper projections indicated a need for 850 students cross the areas we are considering
- The SC and SFC recommended we develop scenarios for 1100 students across the areas (10% increase in TOTAL elementary enrollment which is 2250 including Schofield, Fiske, Bates and Sprague)
- The consensus of SFC, SC and the School Administration is that there are advantages to larger schools. Operating efficiencies, the ability to manage class size (less unevenness of class size), teacher collaboration and professional development, more district wide approach to teaching and curriculum, etc. There is also construction cost efficiencies (cost per student) when building larger schools. Therefore, we had SMMA developed cost estimates for schools sized at 425 students (3 sections/grade), 536 students (4 sections/grade) and 660 students (5 sections per grade). (interesting fun fact -- when Sprague and Bates were considered for renovations, the initial plan considered was 24 sections - 4 sections per grade. The town ended up building slightly smaller, but just a few years after both Sprague and Bates were opened, we needed to add 7 modulars between Fiske and Schofield.)
- For Hunnewell
  - ☐ Although SMMA did do some cost estimating for a new school and larger schools, they have been rejected.
    - ☐ A new school does not really fit on the site without taking down the current building first (due to wetlands).
    - ☐ Due to the small site, there is already a lack of parking. The town would need to consider expanding parking at the Cameron lot.
    - ☐ Due to the site constraints and size, the optimal Hunnewell

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solution is a renovated school of 425 students.

- For Upham
  - ☐ Although SMMA did do some cost estimating for a renovation/addition, it was rejected
    - ☐ The addition would be significantly greater than the renovation.
    - ☐ There is no cost advantage to doing a renovation
    - ☐ The resulting school from a renovation would be suboptimal - flow, educational program, parking, site circulation
  - ☐ The back part of Upham is quite big and could support a larger new school
  - ☐ However, due to the low density of housing and thus students, if we build it, will they come? Or how would we fill it?
- For Hardy
  - ☐ After the N40, this is the easiest and most cost effective site to build a new school while still using the original school.
  - ☐ Building a new school in the back would allow the development of a better site circulation plan.
- The rough cost estimates do not include MSBA reimbursement. MSBA reimbursement, if invited, might contribute up to 30% of the cost of 1 school.
- The cost estimates assume starting construction mid 2016 and therefore have incorporated the appropriate escalation factor. Later start dates would increase the costs by an escalation rate of 3.5% per year.
- The cost estimates do not take into consideration the cost to maintain Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham while we wait to replace and/or renovate buildings. While we work through the process of the N40 and begin the facilities plan, our schools and specifically the modulars are getting older and will require some investment/work to be usable by students and staff.

As you can see, there many options to consider. The School Facilities Committee will be on hiatus until the N40 decision has been reached.



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**ATTACHMENT C – GIS ANALYSIS**

**Town of Wellesley, MA**

Information Technology Department  
Geographic Information Systems Office

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**Brian C. DuPont, GIS Manager**  
**Christine Narayana, GIS Administrator**

TO: Patti Quigley, K.C. Kato  
DATE: July 22, 2014  
SUBJECT: **School-Age Population Projections for Potential North 40 Development**  
CC: Hans Larsen, Meghan Jop, David Lussier, Judy Belliveau

Ms. Quigley and Ms. Kato,

After a statistical and spatial analysis of the Town's Assessors' database, Annual Census, and GIS database, as well as information from the 2010 U.S. Census, I estimate that each new household from the traditional subdivision of the North 40 into single-family lots would yield an additional **.85 to 1.0 children under 18** to Wellesley's existing population. My analysis is detailed on the pages that follow.

Using these numbers as an estimate, a 100 lot subdivision on the North 40 property would likely add somewhere between 85 to 100 children to Wellesley's population. My analysis also indicates that the average age of these incoming children would be **noticeably younger** than the average age of all children in Town, and greater impacts may be felt at the elementary schools. Roughly 25% of these incoming children would be under the age of 5, 45% would be between the ages of 5 and 10 (K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade), and the rest would be old enough to attend Middle School or High School.

The estimates above are for *total children*, not necessarily new *WPS students*. Presumably, a certain percentage of these children would attend private schools vs. Wellesley Public Schools. I'm confident that the WPS Business Office can get you estimate of that percentage.

The estimates above are also for a traditional subdivision. Children from an apartment or condo-style development would likely be very different, depending on the number and composition of the units (# of bedrooms, age restrictions, etc...).

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about any of this information...

Regards,

Brian DuPont

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**Residential Sales** (source: Assessors' Office)

- **8821** properties in Wellesley
  - Excludes apartments
- **1512** residential properties bought/sold between Nov. 2009 and Oct. 2013.
  - Excludes purchases/sales less than \$100K.
  - Includes new residents, as well as current residents moving *within Town*.
  - Analysis includes 4 years of sales to account for families that had their first child immediately *after* moving to Wellesley.

**Child Population** (source: Town of Wellesley Annual Census, received Oct. 2013)

- **6199** children between the ages of 2 and 17 (birth date between 9/1/1996 and 8/31/2012) residing in Wellesley as of Oct. 2013.
  - Because of the timing of the Annual Census, information on residents younger than 2 was incomplete at time of receipt.

**Children / Sale**

- **1578** of these 6199 children reside in the 1512 homes bought/sold between Nov. 2009 and Oct. 2013.
  - Some children may have moved within the town...
- **By these numbers, each residential sale would yield an estimated 1.04 children.**
- Age distribution of incoming children is noticeably **younger** (see table below)

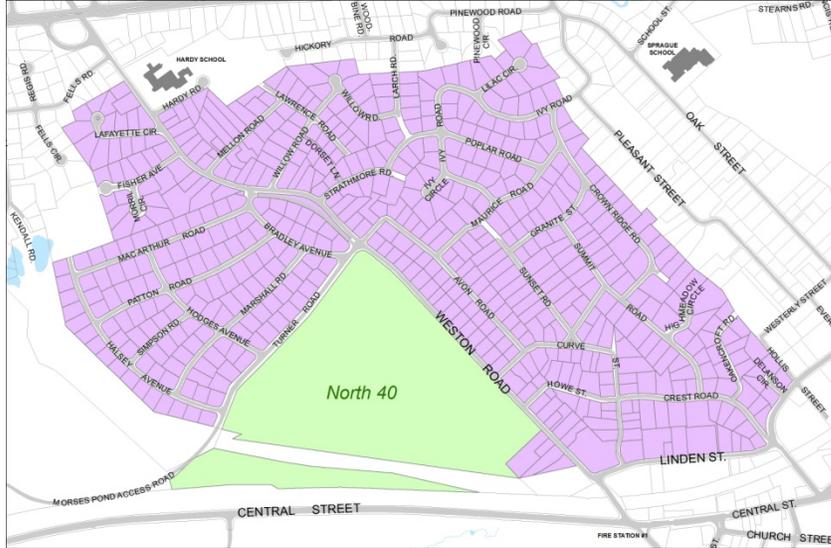
Age	In All 8821 Properties		In 1512 Residential Properties Bought/Sold	
	# Children	% of Total	# Children	% of Total
17	453	7.3%	58	3.7%
16	463	7.5%	57	3.6%
15	449	7.2%	57	3.6%
14	498	8.0%	74	4.7%
13	433	7.0%	58	3.7%
12	444	7.2%	75	4.8%
11	458	7.4%	78	4.9%
10	400	6.5%	99	6.3%
9	398	6.4%	99	6.3%
8	380	6.1%	121	7.7%
7	378	6.1%	114	7.2%
6	370	6.0%	144	9.1%
5	301	4.9%	140	8.9%
4	282	4.5%	141	8.9%
3	257	4.1%	127	8.0%
2	235	3.8%	136	8.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6199</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1578</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**In Vicinity of the North 40**

- **584** properties (see map below)
- **104** residential properties bought/sold between Nov. 2009 and Oct. 2013.
- **477** children between the ages of 2 and 17.
- **133** of these children live in homes bought/sold between Nov. 2009 and Oct. 2013.
- Age distribution is consistent with Town-wide numbers (see table below)

*Map of the North 40 (Green) and Properties in the Vicinity (Purple)*



Age	In All 584 Properties		In 104 Residential Properties Bought/Sold	
	# Children	% of Total	# Children	% of Total
17	26	5.5%	3	2.3%
16	29	6.1%	3	2.3%
15	30	6.3%	3	2.3%
14	33	6.9%	7	5.3%
13	30	6.3%	6	4.5%
12	41	8.6%	8	6.0%
11	32	6.7%	3	2.3%
10	35	7.3%	11	8.3%
9	31	6.5%	8	6.0%
8	28	5.9%	6	4.5%
7	28	5.9%	14	10.5%
6	26	5.5%	8	6.0%
5	32	6.7%	12	9.0%
4	30	6.3%	16	12.0%
3	18	3.8%	11	8.3%
2	28	5.9%	14	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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**From the U.S. Census 2010** (available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov>)

- **8695** total households in Wellesley
- **3730** households with individuals under 18, or **42.9%** of total.
- **7512** children under 18 residing in Town
- Therefore, there are an average of **2.01** children for every household with children (7512/3730)
- **By these numbers, each new household in Wellesley would yield an estimated .86 children (42.9% x 2.01).**