

Recommendation to the Board of Selectmen Suffield Master Facilities Plan Review

Overview by the Permanent Building Committee (PBC)

The Permanent Building Committee (PBC) has thoroughly reviewed the Suffield Master Facilities Plan, which covers assessments conducted from January 2021 to December 2023. The PBC's goal was to validate the original report's findings, prioritize facility needs, and ensure alignment with community growth, technological advancements, and evolving service requirements.

Key Findings

Priority Facilities: The PBC strongly concurs with the Facilities Master Plan's identification of Suffield Middle School and Firehouse #1 as the highest priority facilities requiring immediate attention. Both buildings are approaching critical end-of-life conditions, necessitating major renovation or replacement.












Cost of Inaction: Delaying action is not cost-neutral. Deferred maintenance expenses will continue to escalate significantly due to aging infrastructure, inflation, and rising construction costs. Furthermore, 100% of these ongoing maintenance costs fall solely to the Town of Suffield. In contrast, undertaking necessary improvements to school facilities would make the town eligible for substantial state funding assistance, significantly reducing the financial burden on taxpayers.

Deferred Maintenance: Existing maintenance backlogs have already increased costs. Immediate intervention combined with regular maintenance will prevent smaller issues from escalating into larger, costly capital projects.

Holistic Planning and Fiscal Responsibility: Any projects undertaken must be initiated within the context of the overall master plan. Projects should be evaluated in relation to future work planned for other facilities, addressing both programmatic and physical deficiencies. Most importantly, strategic planning must ensure the efficient and responsible use of taxpayer dollars, maximizing the return on investment.

Current Facility Conditions

This summary review identifies facilities in the following conditions.

Building	Vintage	Age	MFP Priority			Rated Condition
			High	Med	Low	
Spaulding Elementary School	1939	85				Needs Work
Senior Center	1950	74				Good
Suffield Middle School	1954	70				Poor
Fire Department 1	1962	62				Needs Work
McAlister Intermediate School	1964	60				Needs Work
Fire Department 4	1975	49				Fair
Town Hall Annex	1976	48				Poor
Town Hall Annex	1976	48				Poor
Fire Department 3	1985	39				Fair
Police Department	1988	36				Fair
High School	2002	22				Good
Fire Department 2	2004	20				Good

Methods

The PBC received and reviewed the Master Facilities Plan starting January 2024, meeting weekly from March through September 2024. Site visits validated and refined the original assessments. Adjustments to the initial recommendations were made based on direct observations, completed projects, and key stakeholder interviews. Completed and unnecessary scopes were eliminated, reducing overall projected costs.

A time-sensitive financial model was developed, using the Tecton report as the basis, adjusting the original cost estimates using current inflation and future projections over 1–10 years.

Financial Model

The table below summarizes the current cost of all items in the report as of October 2023. Individual projects were assigned a time-based priority informed by the report's findings, direct observation of existing conditions, and input from key stakeholders. Projects requiring immediate attention were classified as "Immediate," while those with lower urgency were designated with timelines extending to "10+ years."

Please note: This cost model does not address any programmatic needs, only facility improvements.

The Priority Columns include the cost of the work escalation since 2023. We have adjusted the "Immediate" and "1-3 Years" columns with actual inflation data and have estimated the 3-10 years column in the future. Due to the elimination of some project items, the overall escalation from the initial estimate is less than expected. Note: \$46.3m has been deducted from the scope of work. These items have either been completed or deemed to be unnecessary.

BUILDING	Escalated all CIP Items		Total of Scope Reduction By PBC	Facilities Master Plan - Costs Allocated Items over Time						Projected Escalation Premium \$
	BLDG SQ FT	10.23 Estimate FMP Scope		2024 1.09% Immediate	2025-2027 1.06% 1-3 Years	2028-2032 1.12% 3-5 Years	2033-2034 1.20% 5-10 Years	2034- + 1.50% 10+ Years	Total over Time	
Police Station	8,955	1,803,686	(412,243)	42,513	772,227	242,154	66,290	405,036	1,528,221	136,778
Fire HQ-1	4,200	982,097	(186,902)	1,285	476,457	181,901	0	217,103	876,746	81,551
Fire-2	3,906	984,067	(173,819)	17,265	4,879	12,293	172,576	900,380	1,107,392	297,144
Fire-3	3,256	711,294	(144,894)	64,321	17,860	114,172	202,271	286,595	685,218	118,818
Fire-4	2,702	595,001	(120,240)	46,966	88,472	44,580	125,995	269,042	575,055	100,294
Senior Center	11,702	2,170,726	(104,149)	8,226	88,623	120,649	310,292	1,632,570	2,160,361	93,784
High School	182,025	94,164,742	(43,059,514)	0	23,730,386	20,731,650	6,085,378	7,704,784	58,252,197	7,146,969
Middle School	128,489	58,347,054	(608,910)	3,493,980	23,724,027	15,628,973	16,810,198	6,763,466	66,420,645	8,682,501
McCalister	72,263	31,737,950	(783,663)	2,833,690	14,405,806	9,439,606	7,285,879	1,221,137	35,186,118	4,231,831
AW Spaulding	71,406	30,358,040	(711,526)	3,406,928	6,983,474	2,836,635	2,049,656	24,183,258	39,459,952	9,813,438
		221,854,657	(46,305,860)	9,915,174	70,292,211	49,352,614	33,108,536	43,583,369	206,251,904	30,703,107

Note: 2023 estimated costs only address the current configuration of the buildings and do not address program needs.

Priority Recommendations

The PBC supports the Tecton Facilities Master Plan, emphasizing urgent intervention for Sufield Middle School and Firehouse #1. Both require significant capital investment to address structural and programmatic deficiencies. Detailed cost-benefit analyses should inform renovation versus new construction decisions.

Additionally, the Spaulding School and McAlister School require planned consolidation to mitigate disruptions during renovations or new construction.

The table below summarizes recommended actions for each building, identifying the most suitable approach—continue to maintain, minor renovation, renovate as new, or build new—and provides the escalated costs of all identified Capital Improvements. This recommendation reflects evaluations of each facility's physical conditions, additional observations beyond Tecton’s original report, and priorities identified through stakeholder engagement.

Building	Address	Continue to Maintain	Renovate Minor	Renovate as New	Build New	Recommended CIP \$ identified in FMP (10.2023.)
Fire HQ1	73 MOUNTAIN RD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	982,092
Middle School	MOUNTAIN ROAD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	48,596,207
Police	911 MOUNTAIN RD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1,803,679
AW Spaulding	MOUNTAIN ROAD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29,714,546
McAlister	MOUNTAIN ROAD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29,478,700
High School	SHELDON ROAD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	63,598,071
Senior Center	145 BRIDGE ST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2,170,727
Fire 2	9 RATLEY RD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	984,059
Fire 3	3 COPPER HILL RD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	711,294
Fire 4	776 THOMPSONVILLE RD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	595,001

Observations

Accumulated deferred maintenance, including painting, door/window upkeep, and exterior façade restoration, significantly impacts current project scopes. Roof conditions remain relatively good due to proactive management plans. Establishing sufficient ongoing maintenance budgets is essential to prevent minor repairs from becoming capital-intensive projects.

Program Needs and Concerns

Feedback from facility users revealed consistent themes: current buildings limit program delivery, although staff manages effectively within constraints. Modernized facilities could significantly enhance service delivery and user experience.

Programmatic Concerns by Building

Firehouse 1 (73 Mountain Road)

- **ADA Compliance:** Facility does not meet ADA Accessibility Standards.
- **Entry Security:** Insufficient security measures compromise user safety.
- **Public Access:** Lacks a designated public lobby, entrance, and restrooms.
- **Training Facilities:** Training room is inadequate, requiring training to take place at Substation #2.
- **Administrative Offices:** Insufficient space for administrative functions.
- **Bunk and Living Quarters:** Inadequate accommodation for on-duty personnel.
- **Fitness Facilities:** Equipment is currently located in the basement, limiting accessibility.
- **Apparatus and Training Space:** Insufficient room for equipment storage and physical training activities.
- **Storage and Decontamination:** Bay storage, decontamination areas, and SCBA storage do not meet NFPA standards.
- **Hot/Cold Transition Zones:** Absent, reducing contamination control effectiveness.
- **Turnout Gear Storage:** Lacks a dedicated and segregated storage area.

Firehouses 2-4 (9 Ratley Rd, 3 Copper Hill Rd, 776 Thompsonville Rd)

- **Operational Suitability:** Facilities are appropriate for on-call operations.
- **Apparatus Space:** Adequate to accommodate current fire equipment.
- **Storage Capacity:** Insufficient storage space across all substations.
- **Hot/Cold Transition Zones:** Absent in all substations, limiting effective contamination control.

Sufield Police Department (911 Mountain Road)

- **Training Space:** Undersized, with security vulnerabilities at the training and lobby entrances.
- **Evidentiary Storage:** Insufficient space to accommodate current needs.
- **Dispatch Facilities:** Restroom and break area do not comply with NFPA 1221 standards.
- **Patrol Offices:** Repurposed to accommodate embedded social services, reducing dedicated patrol workspace.
- **Patrol Storage:** Displaced by communications equipment, limiting storage capacity.
- **Administrative Offices:** Insufficient space to meet staffing and operational needs.
- **Staff Facilities:** Inadequate locker rooms, arms cleaning areas, and fitness spaces.
- **Building Occupancy:** Facility is at maximum capacity for current staffing levels.
- **Prisoner Processing:** Poor workflow; lacks a padded cell and ambulance access in the Sally Port.
- **Vehicle Maintenance:** Desire for an on-site maintenance bay for police vehicles.

Sufield Senior Center

- **Facility Reconfiguration:** The facility has been reconfigured to accommodate mixed-generational use, serving diverse age groups.
- **Programming Space:** The building currently offers adequate space to support existing programming and activities.
- **Youth Services Offices:** Youth Services offices are integrated into spaces serving other functions, resulting in mixed-use activity that may be less effective for focused youth programming.
- **Accessibility of Entrances:** Entrances to Youth Services and Parks & Recreation are not directly accessible from the exterior, causing inconvenience for users and potential safety concerns.
- **Youth Services Location:** The current location of Youth Services offices is not ideal, lacking direct external access and creating accessibility issues, especially for younger users who must cross internal shared spaces.

- **Multi-Generational Facility Usage:** The facility has been adapted for multi-generational use, but consideration should be given to optimizing layouts to enhance operational efficiency.
- **Proximity and Storage:** The Parks & Recreation and Senior Transportation vehicles currently lack covered storage, which adversely affects volunteer drivers and vehicle maintenance, particularly during winter conditions.
- **Office Sound and Space:** While space is currently adequate for program needs, Parks & Recreation offices are limited by the mixed-use environment and potential acoustic issues, as office walls do not effectively separate programming areas.
- **Vehicle Storage Concerns:** There is a significant need for covered storage space for Parks & Recreation and Senior Transportation vehicles, especially for protecting vehicles and volunteers from harsh weather conditions.

A Ward Spaulding School

- **Entry Visibility:** Poor visibility of the main entry from the administrative offices creates security concerns.
- **Classroom Layout:** Classrooms are suitably sized but should be reorganized into neighborhood-style clusters to enhance community and learning efficiency.
- **Outdoor Access:** Only some classrooms offer direct outdoor access, limiting desirable connections to outdoor learning spaces.
- **Specialized Education Areas:** Specialized educational spaces, intervention rooms, and testing areas are inadequate and poorly situated, resulting in significant travel time and inefficiencies.
- **Inefficient Building Layout:** De-centralized placement of specialized classrooms (art, music, STEM, media center) causes excessive student travel time and disrupts instructional schedules.
- **Modular Classrooms:** Continued reliance on modular classrooms is problematic due to their deteriorating condition and inadequate learning environments.
- **Site Security and Parking:** Persistent concerns exist regarding overall site security, inadequate parking arrangements, and unclear boundaries around the school perimeter.
- **Outdoor Classrooms:** There is a complete absence of dedicated outdoor classroom spaces.
- **Play Area Exposure:** The outdoor play area is exposed, lacking sufficient security and environmental protection.

McAlister Intermediate School

- **Classroom Arrangement:** Classrooms are appropriately sized but should be reorganized into neighborhood-style clusters to enhance collaboration and community.
- **Administrative and Special Rooms:** The administrative suite and specialized classrooms (music, art, STEM) are well-located but undersized for their intended purposes.
- **Acoustic Challenges:** Significant acoustic problems between floors negatively impact instructional quality and student learning.
- **Classroom Availability:** The first floor lacks sufficient general classroom space, restricting flexibility and efficient space use.
- **Media Center Location:** The current media center is ineffectively positioned and configured; relocating it to a central area is recommended to improve accessibility and utility.
- **Cafeteria Limitations:** Having only one cafeteria creates significant scheduling challenges and affects daily operational efficiency.
- **Support and Meeting Spaces:** The school has inadequate spaces available for meetings, specialized education services, and teacher preparation, limiting instructional effectiveness.
- **Site Security and Boundaries:** Concerns about site security and perimeter boundaries limit opportunities for outdoor classroom activities and learning experiences.

Sufield Middle School

- **School Security:** There are significant security concerns due to inadequate property containment, making it difficult to control unauthorized access to school buildings during school hours.
- **Classroom Sizes:** Most classrooms are adequately sized; however, several specialized classrooms, such as the World Language rooms, are improperly sized and not functioning effectively.
- **Oversized Classrooms:** Some classrooms are larger than necessary relative to the number of students using them, leading to inefficient use of space.
- **Building Layout and Flow:** The overall building layout presents challenges for implementing a team-oriented model, sharing spaces, and promoting student collaboration—all critical for the student population.
- **Specialized Teaching Rooms:** Specialized teaching spaces and core facilities, including the band room, cafeteria, media center, family & consumer science, and technology education rooms, are primary concerns due to poor locations and outdated conditions.

- **Band Room Capacity:** The band room is significantly undersized relative to current enrollment, forcing alternative spaces to be used to accommodate students.
- **Family and Consumer Science Classroom Safety:** This classroom has an unsafe layout, particularly concerning the placement of stoves and ovens, as the configuration obstructs the teacher's line of sight, reducing effective supervision.
- **Facility Layout Efficiency:** The inefficient layout of the building negatively impacts educational quality, instructional time, and the variety of programs offered.
- **Special Education Resource Management:** Currently, students needing special education services must move frequently between classrooms. Centralizing these resources would reduce transition times and allow for more effective educational reinvestment.
- **Interior Lighting:** Lighting levels throughout the building are inadequate, and existing color schemes exacerbate visibility issues.
- **Natural Lighting:** Several areas within the building lack access to natural light, further diminishing the overall learning environment quality.

Sufield High School

- **Collaborative Spaces:** Increase integration of collaborative areas throughout the building to support modern teaching methodologies and student interaction.
- **Modernize Program Spaces:** Repurpose outdated areas such as the dark room, computer labs, and material labs into contemporary, functional spaces that meet current educational needs.
- **Classroom Furniture:** Update classroom furniture to promote collaboration, flexibility, and adaptability in learning environments.
- **Shared Room Utilization:** Shift away from the traditional approach of teachers or departments "owning" specific rooms, encouraging more flexible and efficient space utilization.
- **Campus Model Integration:** Adopt a progressive, higher education-inspired campus layout to facilitate a more dynamic educational environment.
- **Multipurpose Large Spaces:** Maximize the functionality of larger spaces by utilizing areas like the auditorium as dual-purpose spaces, such as lecture halls.
- **Integration of Specialized and Wellness Programs:** Strategically distribute specialized education and social-emotional wellness spaces to integrate these programs seamlessly into students' daily routines.

- **Innovation and Career Centers:** Establish an Innovation Hub focused on manufacturing, a dedicated Career Center, and an Education & Health Service Center to support diverse career pathways.
- **Career & College Readiness:** Implement a comprehensive Career and College Ready model to effectively prepare students for post-secondary success.

Summary Recommendations

- **Renovation and Maintenance:** Prioritize renovations for critical facilities and implement a structured maintenance plan to extend the lifespan of existing infrastructure.
- **New Construction:** Evaluate the need for new buildings to alleviate overcrowding and accommodate future community growth.
- **Technological Enhancements:** Invest in modern technology to improve the efficiency, accessibility, and functionality of town services.
- **Financial Planning:** Develop a comprehensive long-term financial strategy to support facility improvements and new construction projects.

Conclusion

The Sufield Master Facilities Plan Review conducted by the Public Building Committee (PBC) highlights the critical need for strategic investments and proactive maintenance to ensure town facilities effectively serve the community. Through careful planning and execution, Sufield can create a sustainable, well-equipped infrastructure that meets current and future needs.

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