

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Town of Wilmington is preparing a Facility Master Plan to establish a long term strategy for the allocation of its municipal uses among buildings and sites that are the subject of this study. This *Report* provides the initial findings and observations regarding two aspects of the Town's facilities.

- Facility Condition – This *Report* contains the professional evaluation of the physical condition of the Town's buildings and sites that are within the scope of this study.
- Facility Program – This *Report* provides a description of the building areas and site requirements associated with the Town services and departments that are the subject of this study. The Facility Program considers both the current conditions and prospective future building area and site requirements.

This *Executive Summary* lists prominent issues and topics that have emerged as a result of the investigations of the facility conditions and programmatic space requirements. The balance of the *Report* provides detailed summaries and documentation.

The contents of this *Report* will be the subject of review and refinement as part of the ongoing Facility Master Plan process and be updated. The updated information will be prepared as a final document and serve as a reference for the subsequent steps in the planning process.

### Project Purpose and Process

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This planning process will establish a sequence of short-term, mid-term and long-term recommendations over the next ten to twenty years that will guide the Town's decisions about the best approach to its capital investments and operations. The Facility Master Plan will focus on facilities that may require significant repairs, additions, replacement or re-organization to ensure that the facilities and the services that they support match the goals of the community cost-effectively. The preparation of the Facility Master Plan began in December of 2015 and is expected to take about one year to complete.

The process includes evaluating the existing facilities and their effectiveness, taking into account both existing and potential future Town functions and space requirements. The process will include opportunities for public input. After examining alternative choices for allocating space and facilities, the process will establish a recommended path for effective use of Town funds in providing and operating buildings and grounds. The recommendations will then be advanced to the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administration and other participating boards and commissions for their consideration and action.

The process is being directed by a working group composed of Town staff and representatives of various Town committees. They are being assisted by a professional team led by The Cecil Group/Harriman composed of facility planners, architects, engineers and cost estimators. The research and evaluations associated with this *Report* included visits to all of the facilities, reviews of available relevant documents, preparation of questionnaires by the heads of Town Departments, phone conversations and discussions. Additional meetings, discussions and evaluations are anticipated to provide additional information and clarifications on both facility conditions and facility program topics.

The subsequent step in the planning process consists of assembling alternative scenarios for allocating uses, buildings and sites to best meet the Town's goals. The final recommendations will then be based on the evaluation of the relevant costs and benefits of the scenarios.

## List of Facilities

The facilities that are the focus of this facility planning project generally consist of municipal uses, including buildings and Town-owned sites that are likely to be the subject of future decisions regarding relocation, major repairs, additions, or new investments. Because they are more recently constructed, neither the Middle School or the High School are being evaluated as part of the space or building condition inventories or programming. The facilities and future needs associated with the Recreation Department have been largely addressed by the recently updated *Open Space and Recreation Plan* prepared by the Town, except for the potential use of the Bath House at Silver Lake. The facilities and addressed by the Master Plan include:

Town Hall	121 Glen Road
Wilmington Memorial Library	175 Middlesex Avenue
Wilmington Memorial Public Safety Building	1 Adelaide Street
Public Buildings Office	30 Church Street
Buzzell Senior Center	15 School Street
Department of Veteran's Services (West School)	141 Shawsheen Avenue
School Administration Building (Roman House)	161 Church Street
South School (Food Pantry)	142 Chestnut Street
Department of Public Works (Garage)	135 Andover Street
Water Division Garage	115 Andover Street
Cemetery Office	233 Middlesex Avenue
Cemetery Garage	60 Wildwood Street
Department of Public Works/ Water Department Offices	115 Andover Street
Harnden Tavern	430 Salem Street
Carriage House	430 Salem Street
Minuteman Headquarters	430 Salem Street
Scalekeeper's Office	240 Middlesex Avenue
Arts Council	219 Middlesex Avenue
Fourth of July Headquarters	150 Middlesex Avenue
Book Store	183 Middlesex Avenue
Bath House	1 Grove Avenue
Moth House/Morse Barn	240 Middlesex Avenue
North Intermediate School	320 Salem Street
West Intermediate School	22 Carter Lane
Woburn Street School	227 Woburn Street
Shawsheen School	298 Shawsheen Avenue
Wildwood School	182 Wildwood Street
Boutwell School	17 Boutwell Street

In addition to these facilities, the study is taking into account vacant, Town-owned properties that could reasonably be considered as sites for relocated or new facilities.

## 1.2 FACILITY AND SITE CONDITIONS

The following comments characterize the condition of the buildings and the sites that are currently occupied by Town facilities, based on site visits by the consultant team's architect and engineers.

### Findings and Observations

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- Town Hall is in an aging building not designed for its purpose – The town offices occupy a former elementary school building in fair condition. Many of interior walls are load bearing and are relatively expensive to modify. The building is not conducive to energy efficiency and includes non-insulating windows and frames that are at the end of their useful life. Because the building does not have access to a natural gas supply, the building relies on outmoded oil-fueled heating.
- The Library Building is in generally good condition, although upgrades in building systems and improvements would be needed to meet current practices - The building is generally sound and has had various building systems and architectural improvements. The heating system is outdated, and some elements would not meet current code standards for a building of this type. The site is somewhat constrained in terms of the potential for additional parking.
- The Public Buildings Office occupies a former fire station and is in generally fair condition – There are significant accessibility issues associated with the level changes in the existing building that should be considered. The overall building exterior and interior were in fair condition and need miscellaneous repair and improvements. The building's heating system is currently being upgraded.
- The Town has an important collection of historic buildings and cultural resources – The Town owns and uses an unusual and historically valuable collection of buildings which is linked to the Town's heritage. These include the Harnden Tavern and Carriage House, the Minuteman Headquarters, the Scalekeeper's Office, the Moth House/Morse Barn, South School and West School, Fourth of July Building and the Roman House. Of these structures, the Harnden Tavern, Carriage House, Minuteman Headquarters, and the South and West School are being used as cultural and civic facilities, housing the Town's historical museum, Arts Council, veteran's services meeting space and the food pantry. All of the historic structures are in generally fair to good condition; there are instances of deferred maintenance and upgrades that would be needed to extend their useful life. Most of the historic buildings have adequate site areas adjacent to them, but several are on constrained sites that limit parking and the ability to provide a landscaped setting.
- The Roman House exterior is in poor condition, but is otherwise in relatively good condition – This Victorian-era building appears to be structurally sound and retains some of the interior residential spaces and features. It does not meet many of the current code standards for the administrative offices for which it is currently uses. The historic context of the Roman House has been substantially removed because of the siting of the Town's high school, athletic fields and parking behind and adjacent to the site.
- Department of Public Works/Water Department Offices – The office building for the DPW and Water Division is in good condition with minor issues.
- Department of Public Works Garage – This building is in fair to poor condition with a variety of code compliance issues, potential structural issues associated with an overhead bridge crane.
- The Water Division Garage – The building at this site has significant condition issues associated with the exterior masonry walls which have visible and significant deterioration. The interior concrete floor slabs are in very poor condition.
- The "Fourth of July" Building is a small building in fair condition – This small structure adjacent to the Town Common has some deterioration and deferred maintenance. Not currently in use, the adequacy of the systems and ability to meet current code requirements would need to be evaluated relative to any proposed new use for the building.
- The former Town Hall (current Arts Council Building) is in generally poor condition and would not meet some of the current codes for the uses within it – Problems with this structure include deferred maintenance and conformance with contemporary accessibility and life safety requirements for renovated or new buildings of this type.

- The Buzzell Senior Center occupies a renovated school house and is in generally fair to good condition – This building has a limited number of inconsistencies with current accessibility and building code practices, and may have challenges meeting current energy efficiency standards.
- The Public Safety Building – This building is in generally good condition, with limited, specific existing building code issues that need to be remedied, some building system issues, and exterior deterioration near the entrance that should be fixed. The facility is currently accredited relative to law enforcement practices.
- The Cemetery Garage is in poor condition – This building has concrete floors that are in poor condition with exposed steel, the shingle roof is in poor condition and requires repair. There is water infiltration at the window sills. Compliance with current building codes and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards appear to be required.
- The “Bookstore” occupies a former residence and is in fair condition, and code issues that would likely require improvements – The conversion of this residential structure to its current use as a bookstore raises code compliance issues including the adequacy of the structure and compliance with accessibility standards.
- The Bath House at Silver Lake is a stout structure in fair condition and is need of basic repairs and improvements – If the building is substantially improved, code upgrades and compliance with current accessibility standards would be required.
- Wildwood School has significant building condition issues – Among the 6 schools that are the subject of this study, the Wildwood Early Childhood Education Center is notably in poor condition. It is the oldest building in the school district’s inventory. Many of the building systems are original and have outlived their useful life. To meet contemporary standards and building codes, this building would require substantial upgrades and completion of deferred maintenance items.
- Most of the schools are in good condition and include various life safety, building systems and architectural improvements that have been undertaken over time – The other buildings have been upgraded over time. However, there are common issues with the schools that are typical among the schools that have been examined. In particular, there are deficiencies relative to current accessibility design practices. Each school has specific deficiencies, such as water infiltration through the foundation wall, compliance with current code standards, and inadequate lighting and energy use relative to current practices

## Implications for Alternatives Studies

The conditions of the sites and facilities suggest several key issues that should be explored through alternative scenarios.

- Energy and operating efficiencies - A significant proportion of the Town’s building facilities are composed of aging structures or buildings that have been repurposed. Scenarios should consider the implications of the existing building stock for the ability of the Town to cost effectively operate the buildings and the costs and benefits of either upgrading or replacing aging facilities with new structures.
- Space utilization – Because the Town has such a large proportion of buildings that have been repurposed and retrofitted for uses other than those for which they are currently employed, it may be difficult to achieve high space efficiency. The alternatives should consider this factor as part of the relative costs and benefits of different use and facility assignments.
- Historic values and historic structures – The alternatives should consider the contribution that the historic structures provide to the Town’s identity and culture, and consider options that respect its heritage while planning for efficient and cost effective facilities.
- Effective site utilization – Most of the Town facilities appear to have excess land, somewhat greater than is required for buildings and parking today. However, some of the historic structures and the library site may be constrained because of the size of the parcels, wetlands or other constraints.

# 1.3 FACILITY PROGRAM

The “facility program” consists of the specific uses and the building and site areas that they may need. The spatial requirements will be determined through an interactive process that includes identifying Town priorities and comparing them with individual department needs. The following observations reflect a review of the existing building and site areas associated with Town services, consideration of input from Town staff, and various methods for projecting future needs.

## Findings and Observations

- For those Town services associated with serving the general population, a modest growth in demand can be expected in the future – Projections of population growth by the year 2030 from a low of about 3% to a high of about 10% relative to the 2010 U.S. Census population of 22,325. This would be an increase ranging between about 580 and 2,100 additional residents.
- Services for senior citizens will increase disproportionately and significantly - The population will be increasing elderly; the projected population increase will be concentrated among those at least 65 years old. This will be particularly true if new housing units are provided that will retain or attract senior citizens. The senior population is projected to increase by about 3,000 individuals by 2030 relative to the 2010 levels.
- The population of children is projected to decrease substantially in the decades to come, and the services for children (particularly the schools) are likely to experience decreasing demand over time – Projections for children under 15 years of age are expected to decrease in total numbers and as a percentage of the population. Projections range from a reduction of about 400 to almost 600 children in Town within this age group.
- The Town’s infrastructure (roads and water supply) will not change significantly over time, in view of the relatively small growth that is projected – Wilmington’s citizens will continue to rely on the network of streets and water supply and will need the facilities to support and service them.
- The Town administrative and civic spaces in Town Hall poorly match the available space, and there are some unmet needs – There is no significant shift in the type or extent of overall administrative services or civic space needs anticipated, although modest increases in services and staffing can be expected in line with the overall Town population growth. There are significant advantages to the location of many Town departments and services within a single building. A review of the existing conditions and unsatisfied space needs noted a lack of both small group meeting rooms and larger assembly spaces other than the existing auditorium space and the single large meeting room (Room 9), There is a shortage of public waiting areas in various departments, and shortage of convenient and centralized storage. The overall proportion of circulation (hallways) to the departmental space and meeting rooms is substantial. Because of the structural walls and layout of the building, there is a lack of flexibility in the floor areas assigned to various uses which results in inefficiencies.
- Space and service needs for senior citizens and veterans – For reasons discussed above, the needs and services offered to senior citizens and veterans can be expected to dramatically increase in the future. The Town will need to make decisions about the type and amount of services that it wishes to offer. Space within buildings and associated parking could be increased substantially relative to the approximately 10,000 square feet in operation today.
- The space allocated for civic uses that are occupying some of the historic structures will be dependent upon the vitality and commitment of the organizations and the Town – Uses such as the historic museum, the Arts Council activities, the food pantry and other similar functions have occupied available space, but future needs will be dependent upon those who organize and operate these uses.
- The existing space allocated for the Department of Public Works is not expected to change significantly, but may increase marginally over time - Modest expansion needs to be planned for these functions, and there is limited existing available building area available for expansion today.
- The Police Department has unmet space needs associated with contemporary operating practices – The current layout and allocation of space within the Public Safety Facility has several undesirable insufficiencies, including evidence storage, sallyport, office spaces and other support functions.

- The Fire Department facilities are fully used and cannot easily accommodate additional staff, equipment or operations without additional building and site space – The needs of this department can be expected to reflect the change in development patterns and increases in residential units and other types of development.
- The school administration office needs are misaligned with the spaces available in a converted house - The Roman House building is not conducive to efficient use, and some departmental functions cannot be located within it. Space requirements may evolve in concert with changes in the educational models and school needs, but is unlikely to increase or may decrease in terms of total staffing and space needs.
- The configuration of the schools and allocation of grades results in many transitions within the educational experience of the students, which is problematic - The current pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) to Grade 5 is currently separated into 6 different schools. The Boutwell and Wildwood Early Childhood Centers contain the pre-K and Kindergarten levels, with 165 and 183 students respectively. The Shawsheen (350 students) and Woburn Elementary School (403 students) support Grades 1 to 3. The North and West Intermediate Schools support Grades 4 – 5 with student populations of 279 and 255 respectively. A typical student will experience at least three transitions by the time he or she arrives at the Middle School. Reducing transitions is generally considered a positive factor for students, especially in the lower grades. Fewer transitions are less disruptive to students and teachers. Fewer transitions allow teachers to spend more years with a given student and get to know their character better. It also allows multi-year programs to be more effective on behalf of students such as older students mentoring younger students, “Reading Buddies”, and programs for students with special needs.
- The size of some of the schools are below levels typically considered to be efficient and optimal – For elementary education, schools with student populations of between 400 and 600 are typically considered optimal in terms of effective use of space, allocation of common facilities, faculty size, operating costs, administration and other factors. Four of the schools have populations below 300 hundred, and the Pre-K and K schools each have less than 200 students. Smaller school sizes may have other beneficial implications in terms of neighborhood convenience and the type of educational experience which the School Department intends to provide.
- The allocation and size of the spaces in the schools is below accepted contemporary standards in some cases and will need to be considered in the event that the Town considers significant reconstruction, additions or expansion - Relative to current state standards for the amount and allocation of space, only the intermediate schools meet or exceed the average building area standards. Some of these discrepancies are associated with “core” functions such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries and the like which are typically larger in contemporary schools. These discrepancies become a factor in planning for new or substantially renovated schools.

## Implications for Alternatives Studies

- Matching building use and the size and layout of existing facilities – Because so many of the Town facilities are located in buildings designed for other uses, there are mismatches between the uses and the effective efficiencies of the buildings. The alternatives should consider the potential benefits of achieving a closer alignment of space needs and building areas.
- Distribution of Town facilities – Regardless of the sufficiency of each facility relative to the programmatic needs, the Town has a widely scattered set of separate locations. Alternatives should include approaches to consolidating and limiting the number of locations.
- Emergency response times - Consideration of the response times associated with Fire and Police Department relative to the distribution of uses and traffic patterns should be included among the alternatives tested.
- School program distribution- The alternatives should consider approaches that would consolidate all of the lower grades (Pre-K through 5) in several schools, and options that would retain a separate early education program (Pre-K and K) while consolidating the other grades (1 through 5) in separate schools. Either option would reduce transitions. However, the current size of the schools sets a significant constraint on the types of options that may be considered, since any consolidation is likely to require at least some larger school buildings than are currently available.

