



**Master Planning Town Hall Notes Summary  
October 25, 2023: 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Buehler's Milltown Road Community Room**

**The fourth Master Planning Town Hall was held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Buehler's Milltown Road Community Room. This was the last of the four scheduled Master Planning Town Hall meetings. There were 45 people in attendance.**

**Welcome and Town Hall Purpose:**

**1. Review of Master Planning process up until now**

- a. There is no current master plan. We are getting community input to gain an understanding of what the community needs to serve our students best.
- b. We would like to present a master plan to the board by around the first of the year.
- c. The earliest we would consider engaging voters would be 11/24 or 5/25.

**Master Planning Survey focuses on three essential questions:**

**1. Neighborhood vs. Grade Level Buildings:**

- a. Edgewood and WHS are grade level schools.
- b. Our four elementaries are neighborhood schools.
- c. We will need to either grade level our buildings now, or redistrict our elementary schools.
- d. Grade level schools tend to create equal opportunity for all students and more opportunities for professional collaboration.
- e. Neighborhood Schools create less transition and potentially more leadership opportunities.

**2. The Future at Cornerstone**

- o Cornerstone is a 100 year old building with unquities, and community members have passion around this building.
- o The current physical condition of Cornerstone doesn't work long term.
- o What to do with the building: If we don't tear it down, what do we do with the building?

**3. Cost of Project: We need to figure out how much the community is willing to spend**

- a. In 1976, HB 920 was passed. This meant that what was passed could not lead to an increase in school revenue with increased tax valuations.
- b. We have a substantial operating budget.
- c. Bond Issues and Operation (over 20 million carry over)
- d. We are not in a position where we will need money to operate school buildings. (Operating levy). We have over 20 million dollars in carry over after five years according to our most recent forecast.
- e. If we want to build schools, it will take a financial commitment from the community.

**Comments:**

- The strength in our community is our schools and our children. Triway, Waynedale, Hillsdale all have new facilities. Kids deserve to have a good teaching environment, good teachers, and strong structures.
- From an economic standpoint, every family can give money to education and we can't afford to keep fixing buildings that are expensive to fix.
- A comment was shared from the PTO meeting regarding grade level schools vs. neighborhood schools. Grade level schools solve adult problems. Neighborhood schools address child issues; transition, building relationships with principals and other children.



- Next time something is on the ballot, be transparent about all parts of the plan and the cost. Example: Phase one was communicated, but people didn't know what Phase two was.
- Has anyone investigated the value of the land at Cornerstone and could it be sold to contribute funds toward the project?
- Neighborhood vs. Grade Level is more of an administrative decision-not sure where that fits into the Bond Issue. Kids will learn because of the staff we have and Wooster City Schools has great teachers.
- Is there data on the amount of dollars that have been poured into Cornerstone over the past 20 years?
  - We need the cost of repairs information for all elementary buildings and by square footage.
- What conditions are all buildings in? Bus Garage, Maintenance, Board Office etc.
- Permanent Improvement (PI) money pays for things that last more than five years and is typically spent on building maintenance. (PI levy passed in 2017 stopped collection in 2022)
- Rubbermaid donated the land that created the opportunity for us to build the current high school.
- Wooster High School is 30 years old and still serves the needs of our community. We want our building plans to stand the test of time like our high school has.
- What money does this community have available when we have a 50% free and reduced lunch population? Maybe we need to switch the kids around into different buildings? Who is going to take the value of this project on?
- Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) Funding: The state will provide the co-funded percent. We are not currently locked into any co-funded rate with the state. We would need to reapply.
- What is the average amount of time the state takes to get the district the funds?
  - When locked in for co-funding with our failed levy project the funds were expected to become available to the district within 7 and 10 years.
- How will we pay for the 30 million to update WHS?
  - Renovation at the high school is not a part of our current financial and building plans.
- How will the Master Planning Committee be selected?
  - That committee is appointed by the Superintendent.
  - The Master Planning Committee did develop the previous plan, but we will do the process differently this time around.
  - The committee has not met since July.
  - The committee will provide additional feedback and review the discussions of the Town Hall/PTO meetings but the new plan will be officially developed by the school district.
- Is Edgewood overcrowded?
  - It can currently fit three grades.
- Maintenance is difficult because we can't find parts for outdated equipment.
- Cornerstone is out of date. It needs to be one story. Do something with Cornerstone but you have to have a space to put students.
- We need to build a new middle school before we can do anything else, so we have a place to put students.
- There are ways to add on to the elementaries. (modular units) Step by step is better.
- It won't be possible to keep the facade of Cornerstone.
- Put up trailers as a temporary solution for another school.
- The time has come for Cornerstone to no longer be used as a school building.
- How will we ensure staff have voice and agency?
- When we get a new architect, trust the architect and involve the people.
  - The district did an Education Visioning day to talk about what we envisioned in these new buildings.



- We did a validation study of what can and cannot be provided educationally.
- Will renovation meet the true needs of our kids?
- Can we make arrival and dismissal more safe at all buildings?
- It's important to account for traffic patterns when considering new buildings.
- What was our estimate for the proposed middle school?
  - Approximately between 45 and 50 million
- Edgewood is a part of our long term plan. Because of updates, we could put two to three grades at Edgewood and use the other buildings for the remaining grade levels.
  - With building a new building one school we would be able to close a school.
- Could we stagger school times to accommodate numbers?
- Suggested two churches that could temporarily fit students during construction.

**Next Steps**

- Website Updates: Town Hall and PTO Meeting Notes posted on the Master Planning Facilities Page
- We will compile a list of what has been spent on the buildings.
- We will compile a list of what needs to be done in all elementary buildings.
- We will reduce the cost and communicate more effectively.
- We are giving ourselves a sufficient timeline to communicate the plan.
- We are considering tours of other buildings based on the upcoming Cornerstone Tour.

**Tour of Cornerstone Elementary: Saturday, November 4, 2023: 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Meet at the front doors of Cornerstone to join the tour.**