

TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH



NEARY BUILDING COMMITTEE

TOWN HOUSE · 17 COMMON STREET · SOUTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01772-1662
(508) 485-0710 · FAX (508) 983-7752 · <mailto:nbc@nsboro.k12.ma.us>

April 30, 2025

The Neary Building Committee (“NBC”) is providing the community with an update on the proposed project ahead of the upcoming Special Town Meeting. Residents can find additional information by visiting the Nearybuilding.com website. If you have any questions after reviewing this communication, please email the NBC at nbc@nsboro.k12.ma.us.

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What is the vote?

The NBC is proposing to construct a four-grade school for Grades 2-5 at the site of the existing Neary School. The two required votes further outlined below will authorize the town to proceed with the project, authorize the Town Treasurer to bond the cost, and exempt that bond from Proposition 2 1/2. The estimated total cost of the project is \$108.5M with the estimated final cost to Southborough taxpayers being \$68.2 M (after Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”) reimbursement, as well as potential federal and state energy incentives.

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This is the only option that is being proposed for a vote. To learn more about the options that were studied throughout the process, please visit our website: [Neary Building Alternatives](#).

When and where is the Special Town Meeting to hold the first vote?

A special town meeting has been called **for Saturday May 10th at 9 AM at Algonquin Regional High School**. A 2/3 majority vote of registered voters present is required at this meeting. You can only vote in person and must be physically present at the time of the vote.

When is the ballot question vote scheduled?

A second vote is required to exempt the debt from Proposition 2 ½. This vote is scheduled as part of the annual town election on **Tuesday May 13th**. Polls are open from **6:30 AM to 8 PM at the Trottier School**. Absentee voting is permitted. Please note that regardless of the outcome of the May 10th vote, this vote will continue as planned. Absentee vote applications must be received by 5 PM on May 6th. These applications can be returned via email. If you want to register to vote by mail, [click here](#), to visit the application on the Town Clerk's website.

It is important that if you want your voice heard regarding this project that you **participate in both votes**.

Overall Project Summary

- Must do something with 50+ year-old Neary soon—"do nothing" is not an option!
 - Significant repair needs/costs
 - No sprinkler system—key safety issue
 - Not handicapped accessible
 - Outdated design/structure for educational effectiveness
 - Hazardous materials would be disturbed, triggering substantial extra costs
 - "Repair" update likely triggers new regulations/requirements and high cost (tax impact is not far from that for a new 4-grade school—with no important educational updates).

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- Four Grade School eliminates major school construction projects for another 25 years. Two Grade School (repair or new) would create need for multiple major school projects in a much shorter term.
- Predecessor School Research Subcommittee looked at potential options with and without state funding
- NBC has investigated 12+ different options, including:
 - “Repair/rehab” existing 2-grade building
 - \$40+ million cost; this retains existing education design limitations
 - Build new building
 - Current site and Woodward School site
 - 2-grade (as is, and all other schools remain as they are)
 - 3-grade school
 - 4-grade (current recommendation at Neary site) ->makes Finn School available for other town purposes without need for significant capital investment
 - NBC has considered concerns about current site, including:
 - Foundation soil
 - Nearby landfill
 - Traffic

Where can I learn more about the process?

The NBC maintains a website that is updated regularly including all FAQ’s that we receive and respond to. To learn more or review reports that led us to this point in the process, please visit www.nearybuilding.com.

Through the project, the NBC has partnered with the MSBA who has voted to award grant funding to offset the total project cost. The MSBA process is rigorous and went through various phases. Links to each of the following deliverables of each phase are all contained on the NBC website: [MSBA Project Submissions](#).

Preliminary Design Program (understanding of phases needed to support education program)

Southborough Educational Plan

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Preferred Schematic Report – Process used to review base repair option, plus twelve other options, to narrow down to one option for further study

Schematic Design Report – Schematic Design and costing details of proposed school

Can I watch the replays of the NBC meetings?

While the NBC has hosted hundreds of open public meetings over the past few years, all of which were recorded via the Zoom platform, we've recently held a series of open forums that contain the latest details of what is being proposed for a vote.

This [link](#) contains video recordings of the following meetings:

August 12, 2024 – Committee Meeting and Vote on Preferred Schematic Design to Study Further

March 31, 2025 – Finance Subcommittee Presentation on Overall Project Economics (note some amounts have changed slightly since this presentation and are lower than previously communicated). For the latest project cost, please visit our [finance page](#).

April 3, 2025 – Overall Project Presentation to Select Board, Advisory Committee, and Southborough School Committee

April 10, 2025 – Educational Benefits Presentation

April 16, 2025 – Site Considerations Presentation

How much will this cost me?

NBC has developed a [Tax Impact Calculator](#) for individual homeowners to determine the impact of the proposed project on your individual home in the peak year. A separate update will be sent in the coming days specifically related to project and overall town finances and how this project fits into the bigger picture. NBC acknowledges the economic uncertainty that exists and will provide further details about the how tariffs and other economic factors impact the total project cost limits.

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What happens if there is a "no" vote at the Special Town Meeting and/or on the Ballot Vote?

If there is a no vote at the Special Town Meeting on May 10th or the ballot vote on May 13th to exclude the debt from Proposition 2 1/2, the NBC would convene an open public meeting with the Select Board and Southborough School Committee to discuss the next steps. Ultimately, it would be up to the Select Board to decide whether to hold another Special Town Meeting and/or request another ballot vote. Per MSBA policy, the Town has 120 days to secure the funding for the project from the date of the MSBA board vote (April 30, 2025), absent an approved extension. Currently, this date would be August 28, 2025.

What would happen to the grades currently housed at Neary if this project does not proceed as proposed?

The Southborough School Committee, in conjunction with the School Administration would need to determine how much longer students can safely remain in the Neary School without meaningful infrastructure upgrades.

If the decision was made to close Neary all together and not pursue the required infrastructure upgrades, then students would have to be consolidated into the remaining Southborough K-8 school facilities. The Southborough School Committee has voted unanimously to support Grade 5 remaining in an elementary school building and not placing it at the Trotter Middle School. This means that Pre K through Grade 5 would need to be consolidated into the Finn and Woodward Schools. Based on current enrollment, this would require immediate temporary modular classrooms and a formal plan for permanent renovations at one or both of these schools. In a best case scenario, it would take approximately three years to get back to the same part of the process that we are currently in with the MSBA, so it is highly likely that the Town would need to incur 100 % of these proposed expenses.

If the decision was made at a future town meeting to make the immediate upgrades required to continue to safely occupy Neary, students would need to be temporarily relocated in accordance with the relocation plan already in place for the proposed new four

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grade school. This would come at significant one-time cost for the temporary classrooms and set up a situation whereby the Neary and Finn Schools would need significant rehab and/or new construction in the next 10 or so years, both at the same time. It would also mean that the operational efficiencies (both operations and financially) and educational plan that are proposed as part of this project would not be realized.

How do I get in contact with the NBC?

Please email us at: nbc@nsboro.k12.ma.us. Our goal is to reply promptly to emails but we do have to abide by Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, as well as prescribed communication protocols of the NBC, so in some instances, responses may be delayed.

Our goal is to submit regular newsletters and updates over the next two weeks with detailed updates based on questions and comments we receive.

We appreciate your interest and engagement in this project and stand ready to answer any questions you may have to make an informed decision.

Sincerely,

Neary Building Committee