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MEMORANDUM

5 February 2024

The purpose of this memo is to update the Somerville School Committee on the progress of the K-8 Master Plan and assure its members that there will be ample opportunity for school committee, school community, and public engagement.

K-8 Master Plan Development Process

On December 19, 2023, the Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM) and Somerville Public Schools (SPS) Administration hosted a well-attended public meeting to present the K-8 Capacity Study, which serves as the foundation for a K-8 Master Plan. This kick-off to the K-8 public process included a presentation offering an overview of the districtwide enrollment study, building conditions, building capacities, and feasible solutions to solve the building capacity problems.

As was emphasized at the meeting, the purpose of the K-8 Capacity Study was to enable and inform future planning efforts by consolidating and analyzing relevant data, including the technical evaluation of construction and site constraints in Somerville. The goal of the K-8 Capacity Study was not to make a final recommendation, but rather to present the problem we need to solve alongside some feasible solutions. With districtwide enrollment relatively flat and pressing building needs at the Brown School and the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, solutions focused on those two populations.

At the meeting, we also solicited feedback on those options in an open house setting where staff was available to answer questions. The project material, including the presentation video, slide deck, and the K-8 Capacity Study reports, are available at somervillema.gov/whcis. Members of School Committee and the public at large are encouraged to review the contents of those reports and provide feedback to inform the next phases of planning efforts

There will be opportunities for parents, guardians, and all community members to provide feedback on the K-8 Master Plan development process as well as any individual school-specific renovation/reconstruction projects. As engagement opportunities become available, more information on how to get involved will be made available through School and city channels, and





we will keep the School Committee apprised. Updates will also be posted to somerillema.gov/k8masterplan.

MSBA Process

When drafting the K-8 Capacity Study and preparing for the December 19, 2023, Community Meeting, we did not yet know the outcome of Statements of Interest submitted in early 2023 to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the Brown and Winter Hill schools. Since that time, we have been invited into the MSBA Eligibility Module. Please visit their website at <https://www.massschoolbuildings.org/building/prerequisites> to learn more about Eligibility Module and then click through the other Modules to understand their overall process. The MSBA Feasibility Study and Schematic Design Modules in particular offer the School Committee and District ample opportunity to offer a vision and direction for the plan.

The MSBA staggers the start date for each of the 19 communities invited into their program and our engagement with the MSBA starts in March 2024. As a result of this phenomenally good fiscal news, the integrated team of SPS Administration and IAM are working to meet the requirements of the MSBA onramp.

Next steps include establishing the MSBA-required Building Committee. A call for Building Committee member applications will be announced by March. We will share further details of additional next steps and the long-term workplan, as the process progresses and information becomes available. An update will also follow after our meetings with the MSBA this spring.

