

A Plan to Improve Our High School Campus and Increase Recreational Assets for the Community



South Windsor Public Schools Strategic Plan 2023-2026



Janie Peters, Grade 12 Student Artist

"Society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." -Greek Proverb

About This Document

The Board of Education's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan identifies the following goals:

- *Increase the quality and quantity of athletic fields*
- *Propose a location for a lighted athletic field at the high school*
- *Install new post-tension concrete tennis courts*

The plan outlined in this document, if implemented, accomplishes all of the three preceding strategic planning goals. While a lighted turf field is a new asset for the town, this plan also addresses several long-standing safety concerns; specifically, the traffic issues at the high school and the unsafe conditions of the tennis courts that are in disrepair. We invite you to continue reading for further rationale on each component of the plan.

Proposed Timeline & Estimated Costs

Proposed Timeline

January 2023

- Board approves 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

Ongoing

- Superintendent consults with HS Administration, Director of Facilities, Town Staff, SWPD, and Project Professionals to finalize conceptual plan

October 19th

- Present proposed plan at BOE Special Meeting

October 24th

- Board approves plan and directs Superintendent to continue progress

November 2023 – January 2024

- Seek required local regulatory approvals (P&Z, Wetlands, etc.)

December 12th

- BOE requests Town Council to set referendum date for March 5th

January 16th*

- If approved, Town Council sets referendum date

March 5th

- Referendum aligned with district's professional development day (no students in school)

**Proposed Town Council meeting date is for Council's consideration as it complies with charter requirements. The board also plans to request a snow date be set in January.*

April 2024

- Construction begins**

May

- Begin construction of new tennis & pickleball courts
- Relocate track throwing events
- Demolish old tennis courts (when high school team's season ends)
- Start site work for field and earthwork operations

June

- Begin to install new tennis & pickleball courts and foundations
- Build retaining wall for field & field base work

July

- Complete tennis & pickleball courts
- Start major earthwork operations for athletic field
- Begin driveway base construction

August

- Install bleachers and press box
- Install athletic field lighting
- Start driveway paving operations

September

- Complete driveway improvements
- Complete finished stone for field
- Begin synthetic turf installation

October

- Complete synthetic turf installation
- Complete punch list

November

- Project Completed**

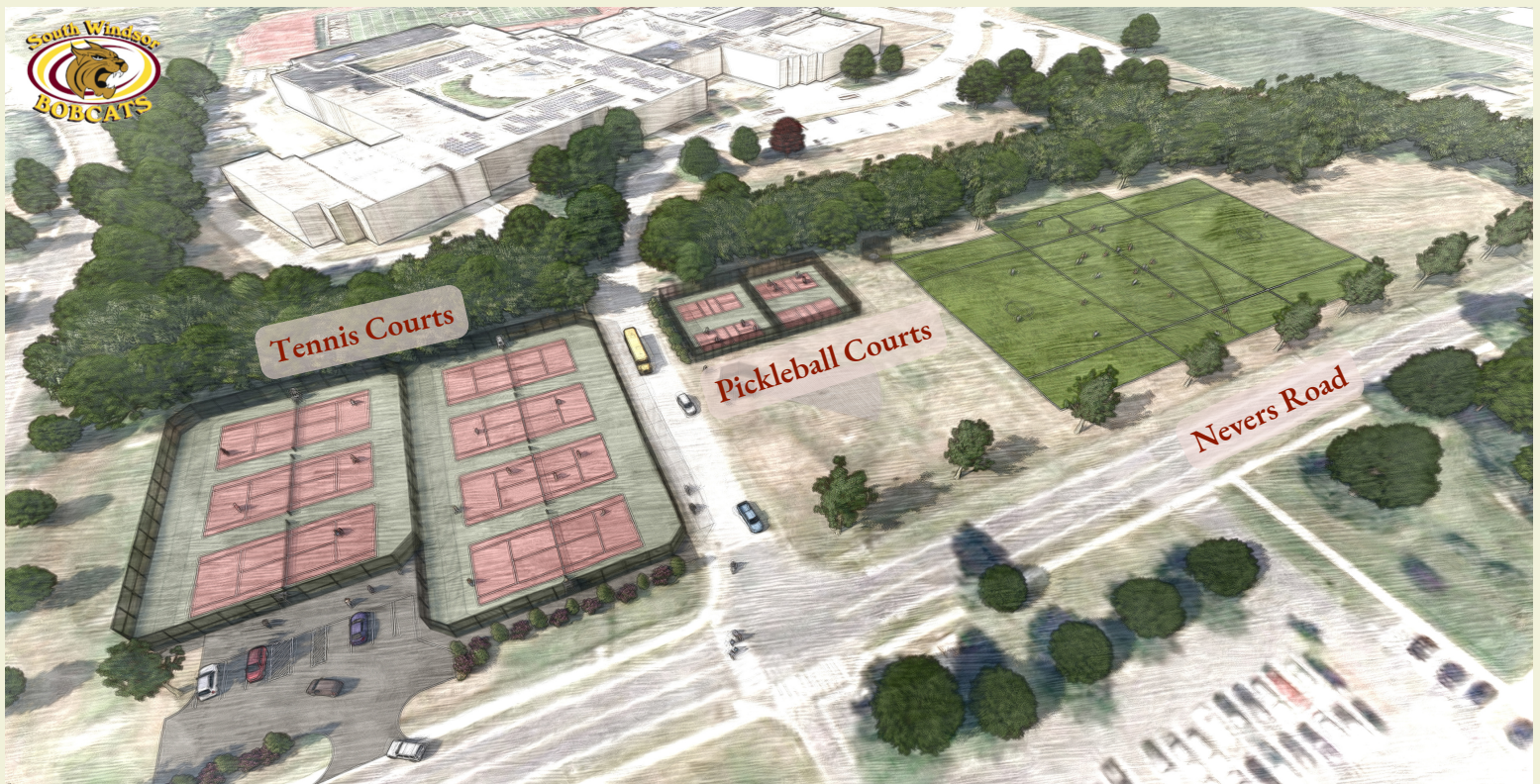
The Board of Education intentionally aligned the proposed referendum date with the district's professional development day so that students would not be in school during voting. In addition, a spring referendum allows the construction to begin very soon after the referendum which will mitigate escalation costs. Because this must be a summer project for safety reasons, we are restricted as to when construction can occur. If the project is not done in summer of 2024 and is postponed until summer of 2025, professionals estimate that the project costs could increase by 12-15% due to escalation costs, which could add approximately 1 million dollars to the project budget.

Overview of the Estimated Costs for this Investment

Lighted Multi-Purpose Turf Field*	\$ 4,600,000
New Tennis & Pickleball Courts	\$ 1,840,000
Driveway to Mitigate Traffic	\$ 550,000
Fees, Consulting, Contingency (±7.25%)	\$ 565,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 7,555,000

* Includes removal of tennis courts, field construction, lighting, scoreboard, bleachers and press box.
(Final pricing subject to change based on final scope of project.)

Tennis & Pickleball Courts



New courts will be located on the high school campus, directly across the street from the Community Center. These courts will be available for community use after school and on weekends.

“As experienced coaches of the SW tennis teams, we have had the privilege of visiting numerous schools in Connecticut and witnessing their impressive tennis facilities. The current condition of our facilities at SWHS does not reflect the talent of our players, nor the pride and commitment of our community. Upgrading our tennis facilities would not only benefit our current players but also the very active tennis community of South Windsor!” - Janet Belval & Casey Tyler, HS tennis coaches

Tennis & Pickleball Courts Rationale

The tennis courts at the high school are over 50 years old and in major disrepair. Students and families have come to Board of Education meetings to express their concerns about the unsafe conditions of the courts.

Building seven new courts in a new location is an investment long overdue. When not in use by physical education classes or the high school tennis team, these courts will serve as a recreational asset for the entire community.

And as many of you are aware, Pickleball Fever has swept South Windsor and is the fastest growing sport in the nation. The addition of four pickleball courts will not only serve our students, but its close proximity to the Community Center will serve many of our seniors.

The proximity to the Community Center will also allow the high school to launch an Intergenerational Wellness Club. Connecting high school students with seniors through healthy activities such as pickleball will benefit both our students and our seniors. We are excited about this potential partnership with the Community Center!

Lighted Multi-Purpose Turf Field



*The lighted multi-purpose turf field will be located next to the High School Annex (formerly Wapping School).
A new location for the Little League Baseball field is under review.*

“As high school football coaches, we are thrilled about the proposed plan for a new field and lights at SWHS. This is the most comprehensive, well prepared plan that we’ve seen, at any time, and the most sensible plan that we’ve seen. This investment will not only enhance the overall experience for our student athletes but also provide a safe environment for our community to come together and support our teams. We believe that this project will not only benefit our football and entire athletic program, but also contribute to the overall development of our recreational programs in the South Windsor community.”

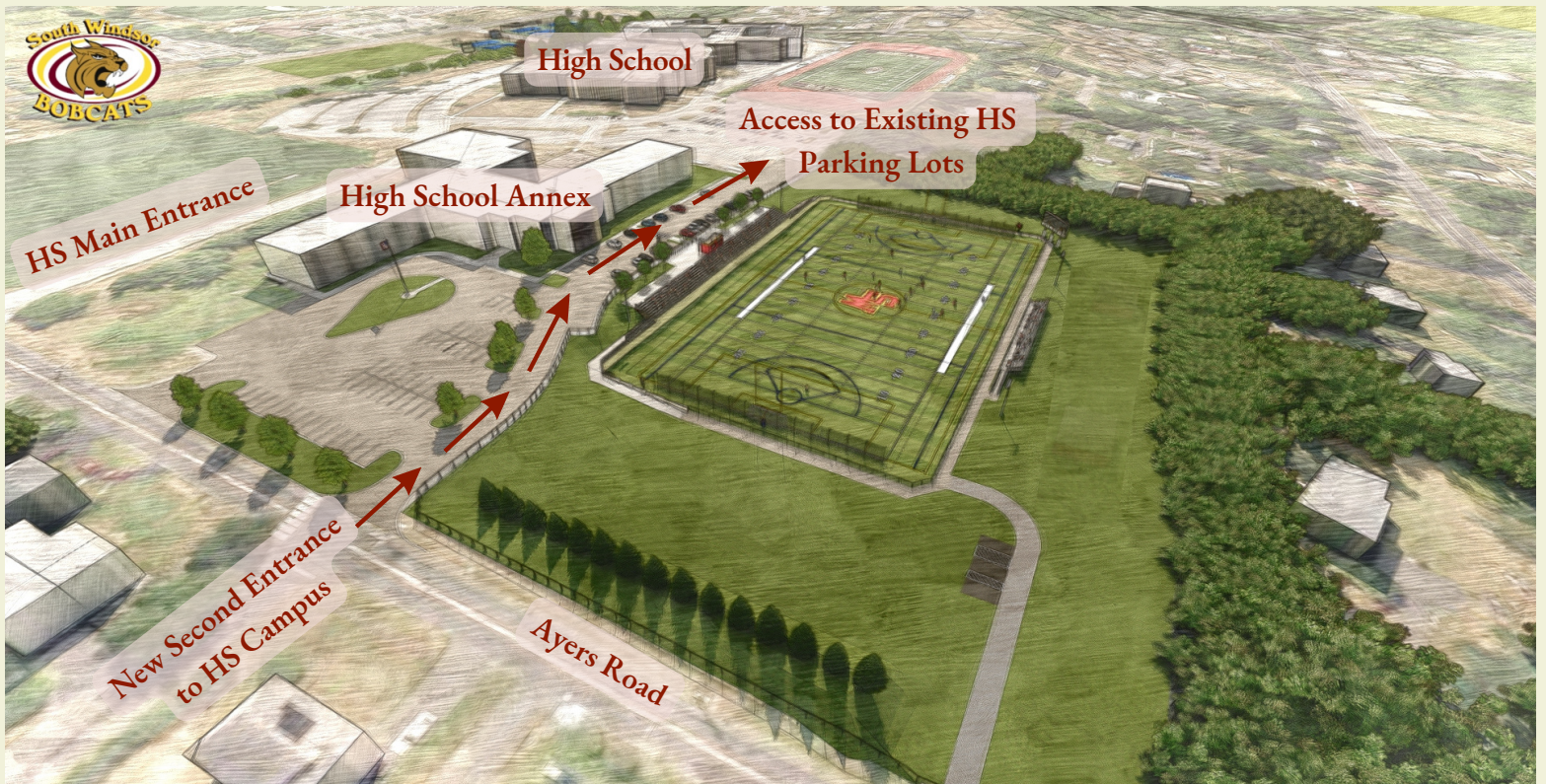
- Dave Hodge & Rich Mabey, SWHS football coaches and SW residents

Lighted Multi-Purpose Turf Field Rationale

South Windsor High School is the only high school in its District Reference Group (DRG) that does not have a lighted athletic field. Twenty of the 21 towns in our DRG have a lighted field. Out of 29 public high schools in the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC), South Windsor High School is only 1 of 3 schools that does not have a lighted athletic field.

A second turf field will address the long-standing problem of an inadequate number of fields. We have both a quality and a quantity issue when it comes to our athletic fields at the high school. Currently, it is difficult to have enough fields available for our teams. This problem will only be exacerbated by our increasing enrollment. The high school’s enrollment as of October 1, 2023 was 1,380 students, and is projected to grow by an additional 489 students by 2033. If we do not have enough fields today, we certainly won’t have enough when we increase by 489 students.

Traffic Safety



A new second entrance will reduce the number of cars backed up on Ayers Road and Nevers Road.

“As the former girls tennis coach and now as the Principal of South Windsor High School, I could not think of a more exciting opportunity for the athletic program and the overall South Windsor community. A lighted field will put SWHS on the same literal and proverbial playing field as the majority of towns in the state. New tennis courts are sorely needed for our high school programs and tennis-playing community. A new driveway will help alleviate several traffic challenges around the high school campus at arrival and dismissal times, and will maximize the safety of students and local residents.” - Frank Rizzuto, SWHS Principal

Traffic Safety Rationale

Anyone who has observed pick-up and drop-off at the high school knows that traffic on Ayers Road is a major problem. It is not just inconvenient; the congestion is a safety issue and over the years there have been both car accidents as well as pedestrian injuries.

Constructing a driveway from Ayers Road along the Annex parking lot and connecting to the existing parking lots at the high school will mitigate the traffic caused by having only one entry point for the high school. A second entry point to the high school campus will reduce the number of cars backed up on Ayers Road, which in turn will help to alleviate the congestion on Nevers Road. This solution was a product of the most recent traffic study conducted by Milone and MacBroom in 2020. As an added bonus, this driveway will now allow for better emergency and fire truck access to the annex and it improves the location of the current crosswalk on Ayers Road.

What Residents Are Saying . . .

“An additional turf field with lights and upgrades to the tennis courts have been an identified need for many years. Although our own children will not benefit from this project as students, we recognize the value that it will have for future students, as well as the community, and we support it completely.” - Eric & Nikki Mahan (President of the SWHS Football Booster Club), parents and active football and boys lacrosse booster club members

*“As an abutter to the proposed field area, I am happy to see the Town of South Windsor continue to upgrade our facilities. This will provide better access for our student athletes, including my two children, and our town residents.”
- Heath Carlson, parent and property owner adjacent to the proposed field*

“Creating an additional turf field will provide needed room for our fall and spring sports to practice without scheduling conflicts. It is beneficial for athletes to practice on the landscape they will be competing on (as opposed to playing on grass, as the terrain is different). In addition, a lighted field will also bring new excitement to the school and increase school spirit.” - Hailey Deptula, 11th grade student and girls lacrosse player

*“We are thrilled to hear about the possibility of new pickleball courts at the high school. We are also excited about the idea of intergenerational play. We have played pickleball through the Senior Center for 12 years, and have always welcomed younger players. This would be a great opportunity to mentor teens and develop relationships with them.”
- Dick & Bobbie Lane, pickleball enthusiasts*

*“Expanding community space at the high school will continue to build inclusive opportunities for everyone. When driving through town, I’m always thrilled to see our fields alive with activity by residents, families, and athletes of all ages. The current number of fields, however, does not meet the demand and this will only continue to be a challenge as our community grows. With the proposed plan, we have an opportunity for the South Windsor community to unite and show support for a project that grows communal space for neighbors of all ages to enjoy.”
- Michael Moriarty, parent and President of the South Windsor Soccer Club*

*“A lighted athletic field benefits not only high school students, but youth sports programs, including but not limited to football, cheerleading, soccer and lacrosse, to name a few. A lighted turf field would provide youth sports programs an opportunity to host a night game and would also provide athletes with a safe space to hold their games in the event of field closures as a result of inclement weather. Our town is in dire need of the proposed athletic plan and safety improvements. This is an investment in not only our high school campus, but in our South Windsor community as a whole.”
- Samantha Petgrave, parent and President of the South Windsor Panthers Youth Football and Cheer Program*

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