



PO Box 222
Newburyport, MA
01950

info@restoreourstadium.com

RESTORE WORLD WAR MEMORIAL STADIUM

Statement of Need

Background

World War Memorial Stadium was built nearly 70 years ago as part of the historic Works Progress Administration (WPA) created in 1935 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The WPA established a landmark labor initiative that put more than 3.5 million men and boys to work during World War II to support their families. Other notable projects built under this program included Camp David and Houston City Hall.

One of the most famous of these initiatives in Massachusetts was the construction of World War Memorial Stadium, located behind Newburyport High School and part of the Newburyport Historic District in this community located on the upper northeast coast of Massachusetts. It took three years to complete at an estimated cost of \$150,000 and built to seat 5,000 people.

For more than 60 years, this concrete stadium was a landmark on the North Shore, initially as the home field of the Newburyport High School Clippers football team and rivaling college venues in its magnificence. Back in the time when entire communities would turn out for high school sporting events, the stadium was known to hold more than 8,000 fans. In particular, a Northeastern Conference meeting between the NHS Clippers and rival Swampscott High School drew almost 10,000 fans from across the region.

In later years, the stadium would open up to other sports, such as soccer, field hockey and lacrosse. It was also home field to the Newburyport Youth Football League for nearly a decade, has hosted concerts, and is the site of NHS's majestic and traditional high school graduation each June, one of the first area high schools to hold an annual outdoor ceremony.

Unfortunately, the years of weathering on old concrete took its toll on this landmark and it fell into disrepair, without needed repairs due to strained school and municipal budgets. In 2002, the North (visitors) side of the stadium was closed by the City due to safety concerns. A group of concerned parents, alumni, school personnel and citizens formed a committee and obtained an engineering site assessment of the damage, compiled by Bayside Engineering of Somerville. The report concluded that while damage to the South (Home) stands was minor and repairable, the spalling and decay on the North (Visitors') side

was beyond repair. The most cost-effective and safest course, by the firm's recommendation and others in this industry, is to demolish the entire North side and replace it.

Given the current economic climate in the City, it would be nearly impossible for the City and/or the Newburyport Public Schools to allocate funds to repair this important landmark. Therefore, the concerned citizens group recently formed the RESTORE World War Memorial Stadium Committee, a not-for-profit organization with a goal of raising \$1.5 million in public and private funds to restore and repair the stadium.

Why Restore World War Memorial Stadium

World War Memorial Stadium is a Newburyport landmark...part of our past and part of what makes Newburyport unique and special. Aside from this stadium being one of the few area memorials to those World War II veterans who sacrificed their lives for freedom, this stadium was the site of so many precious moments in Newburyport High School and community history: high school football. It was not unusual to have 4-5,000 fans at a game. More than just sporting competitions, these events are as much a part of the fabric of Newburyport's history as the city's brick sidewalks and maritime conquests.

This stadium is decaying badly. If this effort is not undertaken successfully now, any opportunity to save this historic landmark will most assuredly be lost. Mindful of the smaller audiences that use the stadium and of cost issues, RESTORE's proposal balances these concerns by proposing to replace the North side with an almost identical structure, made from matching concrete, only smaller and less expensive.

Restoration Plan

After many discussions with school officials, coaches, construction professionals, engineers, and residents, the preferred proposed plan -- to be submitted, reviewed thoroughly, and approved by the School Committee prior to any construction -- is as follows

- Demolish the North (Visitors) side of the stadium
- Widen the playing field (for maximize use by soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, etc.)
- Replace natural grass with synthetic surface on the field (such as FieldTurf)
- Reconstruct the North stadium, pulled back closer to the school building (as a result, the stands will be lower and narrower than the original stadium) ensuring that all ADA requirements are met
- Repair, as needed, the South (Home) side of the stadium, ensuring that all ADA requirements are met.

The estimated cost for this entire project is approximately \$1.5 million.

Fundraising

Funds collected for this purpose are eligible for exemption because the World War Memorial Stadium Fund is a restricted 501 (c)(3) fund, established in September of 2003 under the City Improvement Society of Newburyport, a not-for-profit entity.

To reach the fundraising goal of \$1.5 million, a combination of funding sources will be pursued, including the following:

- *Federal Funding.* The construction of the stadium project was originally a federally funded program and is one of the area’s few designated World War II memorials. Congressman Tierney, as well as Senators Kennedy and Kerry, have been contacted in an effort to pursue funding.
- *State Funding.* The City of Haverhill was recently awarded \$1 million in state funds to restore its high school stadium—almost an identical project to that of RESTORE, also a WPA project built at the same time as was World War Memorial Stadium. Funding requests have been sent to our State Representatives as well as requests for letters of support from state veterans’ organizations. Additionally there may be a potential for historic preservation funds, since this memorial is located in the Newburyport Historic District.
- *Community Preservation Act Funds.* Several years ago, the city of Newburyport adopted the Community Preservation Act, whereby property owners contribute a surcharge amount equal to 2% of their property taxes to fund three key community purposes: recreation/open space; historic preservation; and affordable housing. Since this project meets the first two of the three areas, the Committee has submitted a grant request for \$300,000 for 2007.
- *Private donations.* RESTORE has or will submit funding proposals to a variety of local and national private charitable foundations, particularly those with emphases on sports facilities, veterans’ memorials, historic restoration, community, and/or infrastructure projects. Additionally, the Committee will aggressively pursue donations from individuals, including residents, parents, and alumni, as well as from local, regional and national corporations and businesses.
- *Event Fundraising.* Though the Committee realizes that funds raised by this source will most likely represent a small portion of the needed funds, it will also serve as much needed promotion, publicity and outreach to target stakeholders.

Project Timeline

When	What
3/1/07	Public/private fundraising commences
1/31/08	Fundraising goal reached: final plan review begins
3/31/08	All permits, bids as needed, etc. obtained
4/1/08	Plans approved by School Committee; demolition of North Stands commences
4/15/08	Installation of synthetic turf surface, followed by commencement of North and South side restoration and repairs
8/15/08	Stadium restoration complete; facility ready for use.

Summary

This is a project that needs to be funded and completed because it touches so many people in this community, past, present and future. This stadium was constructed by men and boys in war time, and is as much a memorial to their toils as it is to the men and women of Newburyport who gave their lives for our country, and for whom this stadium is dedicated. It is a place that holds a special place in the hearts of thousands of Newburyporters—not just athletes, but parents, family members and residents alike who gathered here as a community

in camaraderie. It is a place where current athletes of all ages and genders play all sports, where the NHS band performs, where young aspiring athletes dream of running out of the famous tunnel onto a field of play. And it is one of the few places left in the City where a majority of its citizens will once again be able to gather all at once—for concerts, for lectures, for sporting events, for graduations.

We cannot let this unique and monumental community landmark crumble to the ground. That is why a dedicated group of citizens has formed to find alternative funds to save our stadium: because World War Memorial Stadium is not just a sports field. It is a historic landmark...a memorial to our veterans...and a facility that embodies not just our past, but our present and, hopefully, our future.

For more information

Contact: Mary Anne Clancy, RESTORE Chairperson
978-465-5314 or cell-508-246-5319

Website: www.restoreourstadium.com