

**Memo to:** Fred Camillo, First Selectman  
**From:** Bill Drake, Joe Siciliano, Alan Monelli, Dan Watson  
**Subject:** Rink site at WMS  
**Date:** September 22, 2021

The Western Middle School property is in the care and custody of Greenwich Public Schools and the Board of Education who would have to consent to the alternative use for a rink. The School property is devoted to educational use. Connecticut created strict new laws governing school access and safety after the Sandy Hook tragedy. These enhanced safety requirements would make it challenging to build and operate a municipal public rink at a school property.

If a rink were sited at the WMS property, it would consume five or more acres of the 22.09-acre WMS site. The WMS students have been without their fields since August 2016, five years ago. If five or more acres of the WMS site were severed for a rink site, the WMS students and neighbors would be deprived of that field space permanently. A reduced WMS site would likely become the smallest middle school property. (The Eastern Middle School site is 16.08 acres and the Central Middle School property is 22.30 acres.)

Access to a rink at the Western Middle School property is not presently available. If an entry were developed from Western Junior Highway, the rink entrance and rink traffic would conflict with the school access and school traffic. The rink would be in active use at the same morning and afternoon hours when the students and faculty arrive and depart. This would lead to congestion and traffic conflicts.

No entry exists from Hamilton Avenue. The property lines are shown on the attached aerial photo. There is no second access to Western Middle School. The School's eastern neighbor is Arnold Bakeries. A new access from this side would require the purchase of land or an easement from the Bakeries. There is no guarantee land or an easement is available or affordable. Access to the rink thru the Bakeries property would result in a conflict with Bakeries vehicular traffic, particularly truck traffic. Below is a photo of the needed location, which includes the Bakeries security access booth and gate and truck traffic:



The remediation plans for the Western Middle School fields are not complete. The plans and layouts under consideration are attached. If a rink were to be sited at Western Middle School, the rink would eliminate the ballfield (sketched in orange). This would not be a good outcome. The Town of Greenwich has only six large diamonds (90' basepaths). Strazza field is full-size. Western Middle is full-size but is not among the six because it is inactive. There is already a shortage of large diamonds. This shortage would be made worse if a rink eliminated the WMS baseball diamond. The Athletic Field study survey indicated that WMS has the highest dissatisfaction among all fields. This dissatisfaction is likely to get worse if the field is diminished and the baseball diamond eliminated.

In summary, these are the disadvantages of siting the rink at WMS:

- Access is not currently available
- Access would conflict with School and Bakeries traffic
- The school facility would be permanently impaired
- The WMS athletic facility would be permanently impaired

It is not recommended to site the new rink at WMS.