


Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2020					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
Attendees:					
Working Group		Present	City Staff		Present
Sandra Butzel	<i>Community Member</i>	---	Alex Valcarce	<i>Public Buildings</i>	√
Bea Goldsmith	<i>Community Member</i>	---	Jonathan Yeo	<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>	---
Brooke Lipsitt	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Seth Bai	<i>Veteran's Services</i>	---
Norm Meltz	<i>COA Member</i>	√	Devra Bailin	<i>Planning</i>	---
Jack Neville	<i>P&R Commission</i>	---	Amanda Berman	<i>Planning</i>	---
Richard Rasala	<i>Community Member</i>	√	Ellen Ishkanian	<i>Mayor's Office</i>	---
Sue Rasala	<i>COA Member</i>	√	Zachery LeMel	<i>Planning</i>	---
John Rice	<i>Community Member</i>	---	Thomas Rooney	<i>Public Buildings</i>	---
Susan Albright	<i>City Councilor</i>	---	Rachel Sherman	<i>City IT</i>	---
Nicole Banks	<i>P&R Commissioner</i>	---	Linda Walsh	<i>Public Health</i>	---
Jayne Colino	<i>Senior Services Dir.</i>	√	Deb Youngblood	<i>Health/Human Services</i>	---
Jini Fairley	<i>ADA Coordinator</i>	√	Consultants		
Barney Heath	<i>Planning Director</i>	---	Tom Murphy	NV5	---
Maureen Lemieux	<i>Chief Financial Officer</i>	---	Melissa Gagnon	NV5	√
Josh Morse	<i>Public Buildings Comm.</i>	---	Joel Bargmann	BH+A	√
Nancy Scammon	<i>P&R Department</i>	---	James Bruneau	BH+A	√

Alex Valcarce opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:35AM.

Project Website

Melissa (NV5) noted the project website has been updated. Site selection and programming data and documents have been archived under a new tab titled Programming and Site Selection. Existing condition surveys and reports will be uploaded to the site this week and can be found

under the tab Existing Conditions Analysis. Presentations, Meeting Minutes and Contact tabs remain unchanged.

Once uploaded, NV5 will send a link to the DRC today with existing conditions reports.

The NV Area Council meeting scheduled on 10/14 will need to be rescheduled to next week.

Note: Subsequent to meeting, the NVAC meeting was rescheduled to Thursday, 10/22, at 7:00PM.

BH+A noted the Existing Conditions Assessment is a DRAFT report and is not the final version.

All reports with any cost impact have been prepared and posted. A traffic survey is pending.

Based on existing conditions analysis, initial cost estimates for both a renovation and a new scheme, can be prepared. Project scope, rather than a particular scheme, is critical in determining an estimated cost.

Case Studies

The following five (5) design case studies were presented to the Working Group today with variations of Option #1 to retain portions of the existing building:

- Option A Retain Existing Building
- Option A1 Parking Entry from Walnut Place
- Option B New Wing North – Existing Building (3 Story)
- Option C New Wing South – Existing Building (3 Story)
- Option D Retain Existing Center Tower (3 Story)
- Option E New Building (4 story)
- Option E1 New Building – L Shape (4 story)

Option A (parking access from Highland Ave)

With the large multipurpose room, dining and kitchen on the ground floor, parking is limited to 17 spaces. With parking access from Highland Ave, pressure is limited to Walnut Place residences. Upper floors are stacked similarly to schemes previously presented, with the gym/walking track massing above parking. It was discussed that although multipurpose and dining are at grade, these

program areas may be better situated closer to the entry lobby. Also, onsite parking is reduced from 27-34 spaces (previously presented) to 17 spaces. This is a 3-story scheme.

Option A1 (parking access from Walnut Place)

This option reorients the large ground floor multipurpose room, dining and kitchen to be along Highland Ave, off of the main entry lobby, with parking access from Walnut Place. This option essentially flips the layout of Option A. This is a 3-story scheme.

Option B (new wing north – existing building - 3 stories)

To alleviate some tension between program and limitations of the existing building, this option creates a new north side wing, which increases available ground floor programming area. Adjacent to the main entry lobby, with through access from the parking garage to Walnut Street, the multipurpose room and dining would front Highland Ave. Upper floors are stacked similarly to schemes previously presented, with the gym/walking track massing above parking. This is a 3-story scheme.

Option C (new wing south – existing building - 3 stories)

This option reorients the large ground floor multipurpose room, dining and kitchen to be along Walnut Place, off of the main entry lobby, with parking access from Highland Ave. This option flips the layout of Option B while maximizing available ground floor space, with the main entry to the south of the existing rotunda. Upper floors are stacked similarly to schemes previously presented with the gym/walking track massing above parking, plus art, classroom areas and a roof deck oriented to overlook Walnut Street.

Option D (retain existing center tower - 3 stories)

This option maximizes the ground floor programming area, while retaining the central rotunda, which is the most significant piece of the existing building. Similar to other options presented, the large multipurpose room, dining and kitchen are all at the ground floor, accessible off the main lobby, with parking access from Highland Ave.

It was noted that although the existing front entrance is usable, for security reasons this door is used for egress only, not access.

In addition to the aforementioned case studies, a few options were presented with regard to removing the existing building in its entirety and building a new facility:

- Option E New Building (4 story)
- Option E1 New Building – L Shape (4 story)

Option E (new building – 4 stories)

This option is a variation of a 4 story option previously presented. With the building footprint reoriented along Walnut Place, and parking along Highland Ave., the number of (uncovered) parking spaces is maximized.

With regard to whether there is merit in rotating the building 90 degrees, with parking along Walnut Street, it was discussed that a large hardscape in front would not be not conducive to community gathering.

Option E1 (new building – L shape – 3 stories)

This L-shaped scheme was previously presented, although with a few tweaks to the massing. Parking is maximized with 34 onsite spaces and a pass through lobby, connecting to Walnut Street. The massing is stepped back from the commercial district southward, towards Walnut place, to be more compatible with the neighbors. A large ground floor multipurpose room, dining and kitchen are along Highland Ave, creating an urban connection, while accessible from the main lobby. The upper floors are stacked with the gym/walking track partially covering the parking.

Option E1A (new building – L shape – 4 stories)

This is a variation of the 3-story L-shaped Option E1. In this option, massing at the corner of Walnut Street and Walnut Place is eroded to help foster a connection with the neighbors. A large 4th floor deck would create a space for outdoor programming, overlooking Walnut Street.

Discussion

- Parking on the corner of Walnut Street and Highland Ave is not desirable. Parking should be behind the building. A 3-story option would be more desirable from both administrative and public access points of view and would feel less intrusive in the neighborhood.
- A 3-story building could work if entire parking lot was covered with usable program area.

- The majority of administration programming on first floor is desirable.
- Hazmat will need to be addressed regardless of whether add/reno or new construction is determined as the preferred option. Abatement will be required with either option to ensure hazardous materials are disposed of properly.
- With regard to accessibility, the former Walnut Street main entrance, will not work as a new main entrance.
- It is important to address universal access needs of the specific user group with the Newton Historic Commission.
- None of the interior detailing can be preserved while making the building structurally preserved.
- As part of fundraising efforts, consideration can be made to raffle off existing bricks
- A narrative will need to be submitted to NHC and MHC with regard to what would be proposed to commemorate the existing building.
- An inquiry will be made to the Newton Historical Society to determine what information is available re: construction of the library.
- As a tribute to the existing building can be created, perhaps with a large photo of the existing building accompanied by a website with photos and narrative documenting the building history.
- Existing items will need to be catalogued to determine what should be salvaged and repurposed, including the reading room chandeliers.

Additional Upcoming Meetings (all online with remote participation via Zoom):

- 10/22/20 Newtonville Area Council meeting (date changed)
- 10/27/20 NewCAL Working Group meeting
- 11/18/20 DRC meeting

Melissa G shall coordinate with Alex and Jayne and distribute Zoom info for all meetings noted, as it becomes available.

NV5 shall send out notices to the WG of any additional upcoming meetings relative to this project.