

Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) project

NewCAL Working Group Meeting					
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2020					
Date: Zoom Meeting (online)					
Time: 9:30 AM					
Attendees:					
Alex Valcarce	Public Buildings Dept.	Y	Linda Walsh	Public Health Dept.	---
Amanda Berman	Planning Department	---	Maureen Lemieux	Chief Financial Officer	---
Barney Heath	Planning Department	Y	Nancy Scammon	Parks & Rec Dept.	Y
Bea Goldsmith	Community Member	---	Norm Meltz	Community Member	Y
Bob DeRubeis	Parks & Rec Dept.	---	Rachel Sherman	City IT	---
Brooke Lipsitt	Community Member	Y	Richard Rasala	Community Member	Y
Carol Schein	Community Member	Y	Sandra Butzel	Community Member	---
Deb Youngblood	Health/Human Services	---	Seth Bai	Veteran's Services	---
Devra Bailin	Planning Department	Y	Sue Rasala	Community Member	Y
Ellen Ishkanian	Mayor's Office	---	Susan Albright	City Councilor	Y
Gabriel Holbrow	Planning Department	---	Thomas Rooney	Public Buildings Dept.	---
Jack Neville	Parks & Rec Dept.	---	Zachery LeMel	Planning Department	---
Jayne Colino	Senior Services Director	Y			
Jini Fairley	Working Group	Y	Tom Murphy	NV5	---
John Rice	Community Member	Y	Melissa Gagnon	NV5	Y
Jonathan Yeo	Chief Operating Officer	Y	Joel Bargmann	BH+A	Y
Josh Morse	Public Buildings Dept.	Y	James Bruneau	BH+A	Y

Josh Morse opened up the online Zoom meeting at 9:30AM.

A project plan, including milestones, is contingent upon site selection. The goal is for site selection will be this June, with a Community meeting anticipated for this May. Solutions to challenges and major questions previously raised by the Community will be addressed.

A meeting scheduled on 4/01/20 with Newtonville area businesses needs to be rescheduled. A meeting with Newtonville are residents also needs to be scheduled.

As part of the site evaluation process between the two sites (Newton Center Triangle and current Senior Center) challenges and solutions need to be shown comparatively, as pros and cons. A final parking plan concept needs to be shown, even in its infancy. Density studies will help determine whether a concept should be pursued further.

Existing Senior Center site

BH+A prepared a PowerPoint Preliminary Draft presentation for review - NewCAL Studies for the existing Senior Center site, dated 3/31/20. An overview was provided of the building location, in geometric context of its immediate surroundings. From the façade of the Rox Diner, going due south along Walnut Street, 30+ feet of potential buildable area exists in front of the current Senior Center. This space accounts for approximately ¼ of the site. Four options were discussed.

The highlighted yellow rectangle, shown at the base of Highland Ave near Walnut Street, is part of the Walnut Street enhancement plan. Implementation of the Walnut Street plan is scheduled to begin this Spring and carry into Summer and Fall and perhaps into Spring of 2021. Finding a good location for a truck loading zone was challenging. The City shall provide plans to BH+A.

BH+A explained the first floor of the current Senior Center is 5 feet above grade, with windows above book stacks. A one-story addition could be built without blocking windows. Each of the two reading rooms is approximately 1000 SF. The site will be more functional if the mixture of massing and window heights, at the backside of the building, were removed. For study options 1, 2 and 3 a new addition would be three stories tall. For all options, mitigating grade differentials and increased onsite parking will need to be studied. Option highlights are as follows:

Option #1: Least onsite parking (20) with most programming at grade, with an addition along Walnut Street. The main entrance at Highland Ave would lead to a one-story addition in front of the building, with Administration and Art and Activity rooms. Activity/Dining are to the west/backside, with BOH programming (kitchen and receiving) adjacent. Floors 2 and 3 are a gym/walking track, fitness, café and additional activity spaces.

Option #2: More onsite parking (33) with an addition at the back only. A transition zone would separate the existing and new addition with a lounge, café and gallery spaces. Dining/activity, kitchen and administration would be on floors 2 and 3 with gym/track and fitness. A drop off zone could be carved in along Highland Ave.

Option #3: Similar to Option #2 but with additions at both the back and front to accommodate an Admin suite on the ground floor. 33 onsite parking spaces. A transition zone would separate the existing and new addition with a lounge, café and gallery spaces. Dining/activity, kitchen and administration would be on floors 2 and 3 with gym/track and fitness. A drop off zone could be carved in along Highland Ave.

Option #4: Most onsite parking (52) with existing building removed and all new construction. First floor programming would be minimal with reception and café only. The majority of program areas would be on floors 2 and 3 including administration, dining/activity, classrooms/meeting/art, kitchen, gym/track and fitness.

The aforementioned studies represent that building program can be accommodated on the current Senior Center site. The options show a range of options along Highland Ave. Rough parking numbers are between 20 and 55, depending on the design option. Another 20 parking spaces can likely be located off site.

Some items from the existing building may need to be salvaged, to be repurposed.

The project will be a much easier sell to the Community if the existing building were to remain.

BH+A will study elevator capacity and determine the need for a 2nd elevator, with so much of the program elevated.

Ideally, participants should be kept out of the basement. The basement should be dedicated for services which do not require a lot of natural light including utilities and BOH programming.

Newton Center Triangle site

With regard to the Newton Center Triangle site, impact mitigation will need to be determined. On street parking will need to be optimized, as well as utilization of existing assets, to create a minimum of 155 parking spaces, which would be off line during construction. Primary Community concerns include an extended timetable, Community impact and concern both during and after construction. Creating 155 parking spaces prior to the Triangle site going off line attributes to the extended timeline. Parking in Newton Center is multifaceted as it encompasses parking for patrons, employees, commuters and residents. In keeping the design

relatively simple, 80+ parking spaces could be maintained with NewCAL built facing the Newton Center green. The question is not whether program can be accommodated although more so whether enough of a solution can be offered to mitigate impact.

A real traffic study and parking plan will need to be done. Given the current public health crisis of Covid-19, it is not feasible for a true study to be done now, or likely anytime in the near future.

A construction management plan mitigated impact to Newtonville during the Austin Street project. Parking mitigation will be less complex in Newtonville vs. Newton Center.

The two sites would be comparable in cost only if the Newton Center lot was taken over for NewCAL and no new parking was created. Otherwise, the project budgets are not comparable.

The concept of a public private partnership at the Newton Center Triangle site would extend the timeline. The City shall prepare a draft timeline to show steps involved for a partnership. A partnership for Newton Center, with mixed-use and housing components, could possibly be an independent project run on a parallel path, alongside NewCAL in Newtonville.

As a result of the BH+A preliminary concept design studies, it was proven that the NewCAL program can be accommodated at both the Newton Center Triangle and the current Senior Center sites, with keeping or razing the existing building in Newtonville. These are two viable sites, in terms of fitting program. In terms of timeline and cost, the Newton Center site is more expensive, has a longer timeline and a greater neighborhood impact.

3-D renderings will be helpful to show relationships of building massings to the neighborhood.

Next steps include the City scheduling a meeting (via Zoom) with Newtonville area businesses as well as a meeting with Ward 2 and Ward 6 City councilors.

Upcoming Meetings

All upcoming meetings will be online with remote participation via Zoom:

- Working Group meetings will continue bi-weekly on Tuesdays at 9:30AM with upcoming meetings on 04/14/20 and 04/28/20
- The next Community meeting is anticipated for Thursday, May 7, at 7:00PM

NewCAL Studies for the existing Senior Center Site

very preliminary concepts and density studies to facilitate discussion of design
challenges and opportunities

Working Group Meeting

March 31, 2020

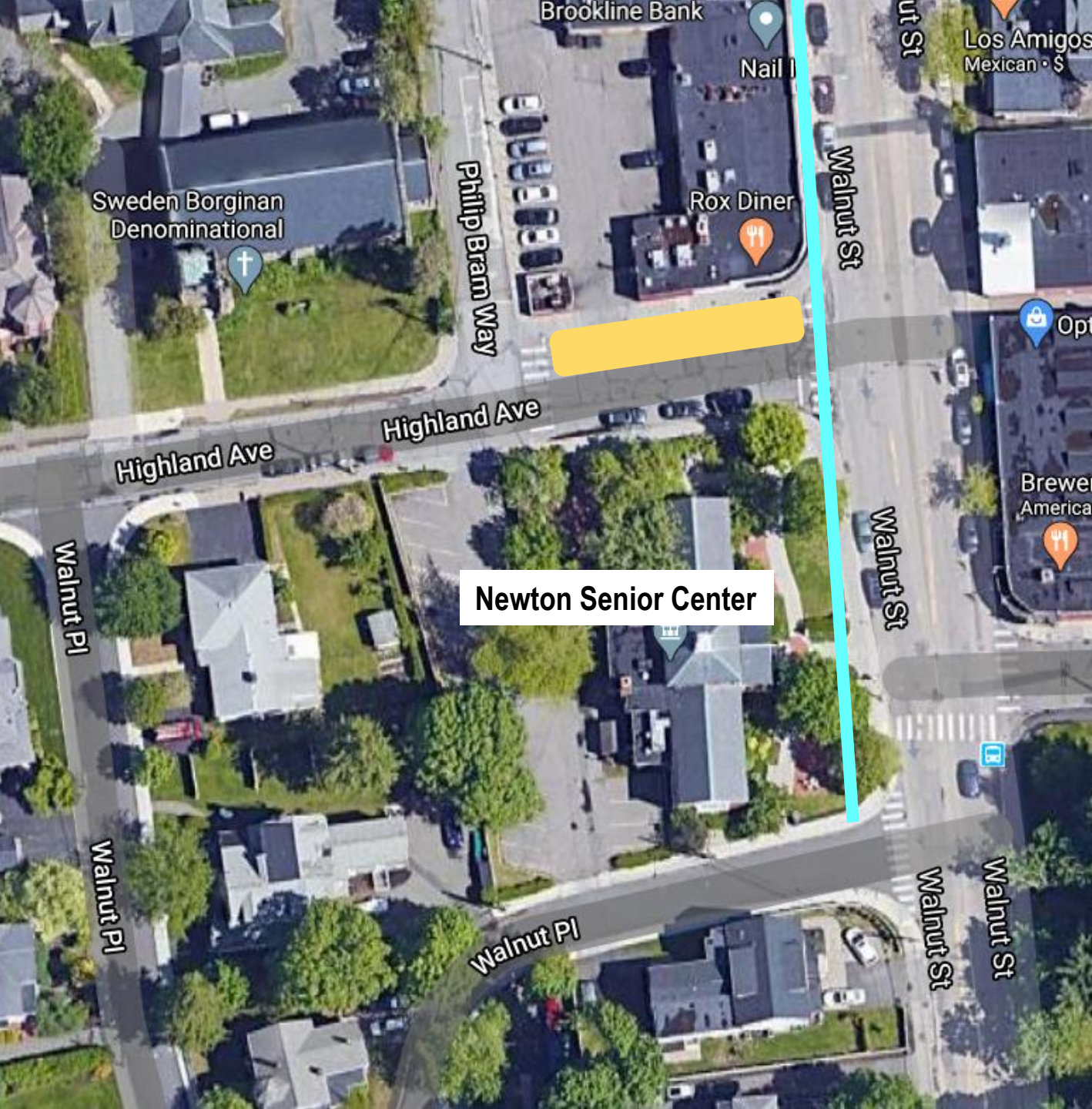
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The Senior Center site is shown outlined. It is 25,909 sf. There are approximately 15 parking spaces to the west of the building. Some users park in unmarked spaces along the driveway.

The Senior Center Building is “betwixt and between”. It is oriented geometrically in alignment with the Newtonville commercial buildings to the north and east. However, the street grid the Senior Center is on orients along the angle of Highland Ave. Buildings to the south of Highland Ave are aligned to that angle.

As the project develops, Working Group discussions may consider how to use the front yard to the east of the existing Senior Center. The geometry of the site provides for a potential addition.



The **blue line** shows the face of the buildings along Walnut Street extending south. The Senior Center building is aligned on this geometry. This line shows that if one carries the building line onto the Senior Center Site, there is potential buildable area in front of the existing building.

The **orange rectangle** shows that there is a widened road section along Highland Ave across the street from the Senior Center. This could be used to adjust the intersection of Highland Ave with Walnut Street. The result, as you will see on the sketches, is that the Senior Center site can be enlarged “into” Highland Ave providing greater potential floor area and potential drop-off parking areas.



This photo is of the northern side of the Senior Center Building. The windows are relatively high above the ground. A one-story addition could be constructed against this façade without obscuring too much of this potentially beautiful window.

The photo also demonstrates that there is space to add onto the building either to the east or west (left or right) sides of the building.

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As you know, the main floor level of the Senior Center is 5 feet above the outside ground level. There is a basement level about 7 feet below existing outdoor grade.

A starting point of this study has been to determine if it is feasible to add floor area at the street level in order to create space for the senior center that is readily accessible to those with physical challenges.

We know that a new building will be a multi-story building. A major decision point for the Working Group will be to discuss how the floor levels of the new space line up or do not line up with the floor levels of the existing building.

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A central lobby connects stairs to the former main entry and to the basement. There are two program rooms to the left and right of this lobby as seen in pictures on the next page.

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Two well lighted “reading rooms” flank both sides of a central, two story center space. Each room is almost 1,000 sf and would make good size program spaces although, they are not easily sub dividable into two smaller rooms each. The windows are designed to work with the library stacks and are thus relatively high off of the floor.



On the lower level, two generously sized rooms are on either side of the center stair. The south wing room is reached via a corridor. These walls are not load bearing walls. There are windows in these rooms; they are high up. Windowsills line up with the top of doors.



This is the “back side” of the existing Senior Center. This area is not designed to be program space, rather it is mostly back of house type space. The existing building will be better used if this mixture of room heights and window heights is removed. It allows for a much better and functional addition to be added.

The new addition is going to be three stories tall. Thus, the existing elevator will not serve the new addition. If it needs to be reconstructed, it can be relocated in a more optimum location for the new layout.

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This is the parking area at the rear of the building. The drive through parking lot enters on Walnut Court and exits onto Highland Avenue.

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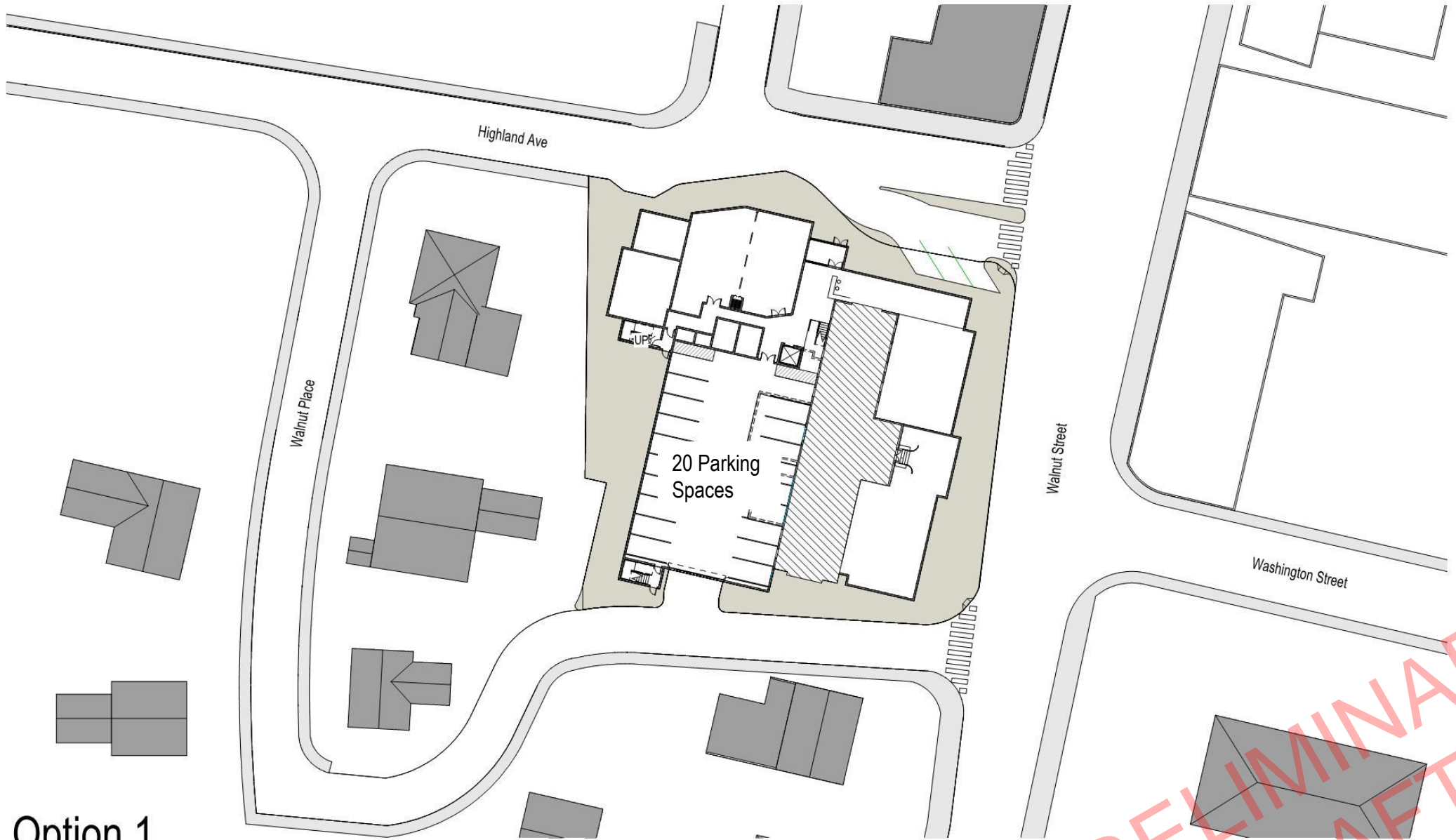
Very Preliminary NewCAL Studies of the existing Senior Center Site

The following sketches are created to facilitate the discussion of design challenges and opportunities associated with locating NewCAL at the existing Newton Senior Center site.

The studies explore different approaches to parking. Option 1 has the least parking as more of the senior center is at grade using available ground area that would otherwise be parking space. Option 3 explores how much parking you could possibly get if one was to use the entire site for parking by removing the existing building. In option 3, most of the building is on the second above. It is a benchmark used to establish the upper limit of available parking. Option 2 lies in between these two starting points. You can see that trade-offs result from these different approaches.

The density studies explore different ways to add onto the existing building. For example, option 2 locates most of the new senior center space behind (to the west) of the existing building. The existing front and most of the sides of the existing building are still visible. On the other hand, option 1 shows building in front of the existing façade on Walnut Street. The point is to see how much space can possibly be created at grade level floor with barrier free access.

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Option 1

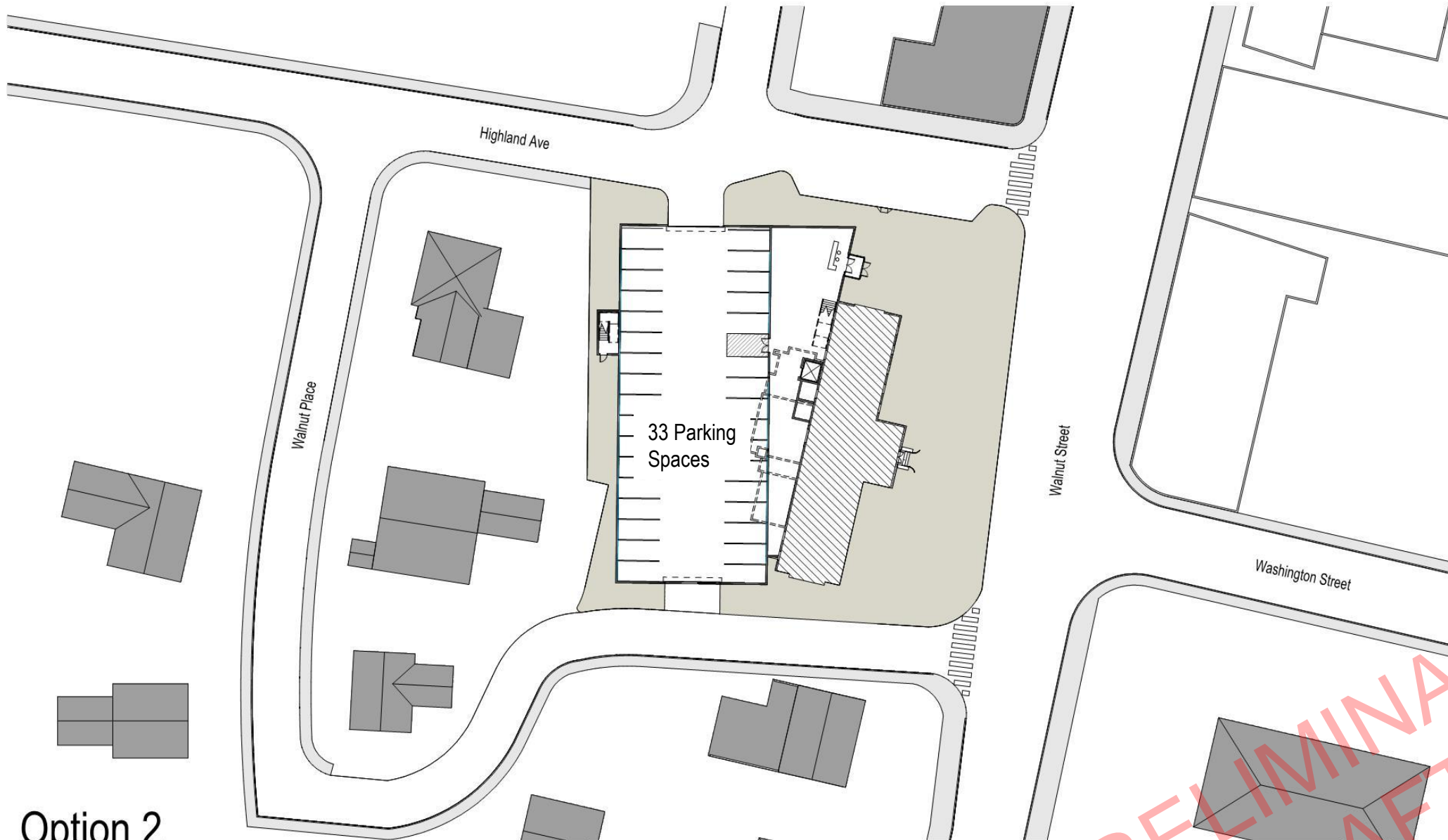
NewCal Newton Community Center
Site Plan

Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype 9 Channel Center Street Boston, MA 02210 Tel: (617) 350-0450
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Draft Site Studies Working Group Meeting 3/31/2020

26,000sf Program Area
8,500sf Gym & Track
6,200sf Garage





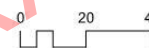
Option 2

NewCal Newton Community Center
Site Plan Option 2

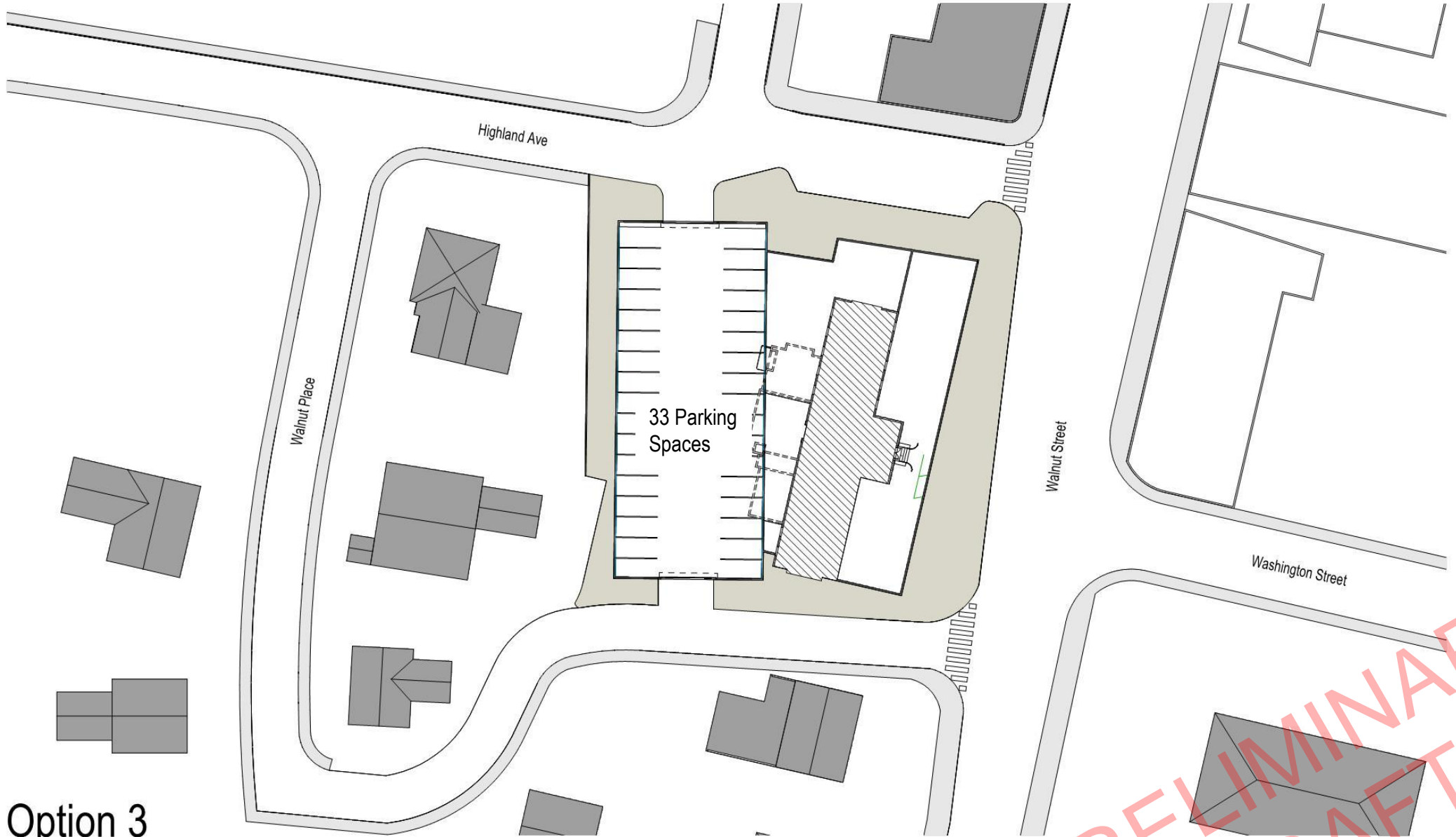
Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype 9 Channel Center Street Boston, MA 02210 Tel: (617) 350-0450
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22,000sf Program Area
8,500sf Gym & Track
9,900sf Garage



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Option 3

NewCal Newton Community Center
Site Plan Option 3

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27,000sf Program Area
8,500sf Gym & Track
9,900sf Garage

0 20 40



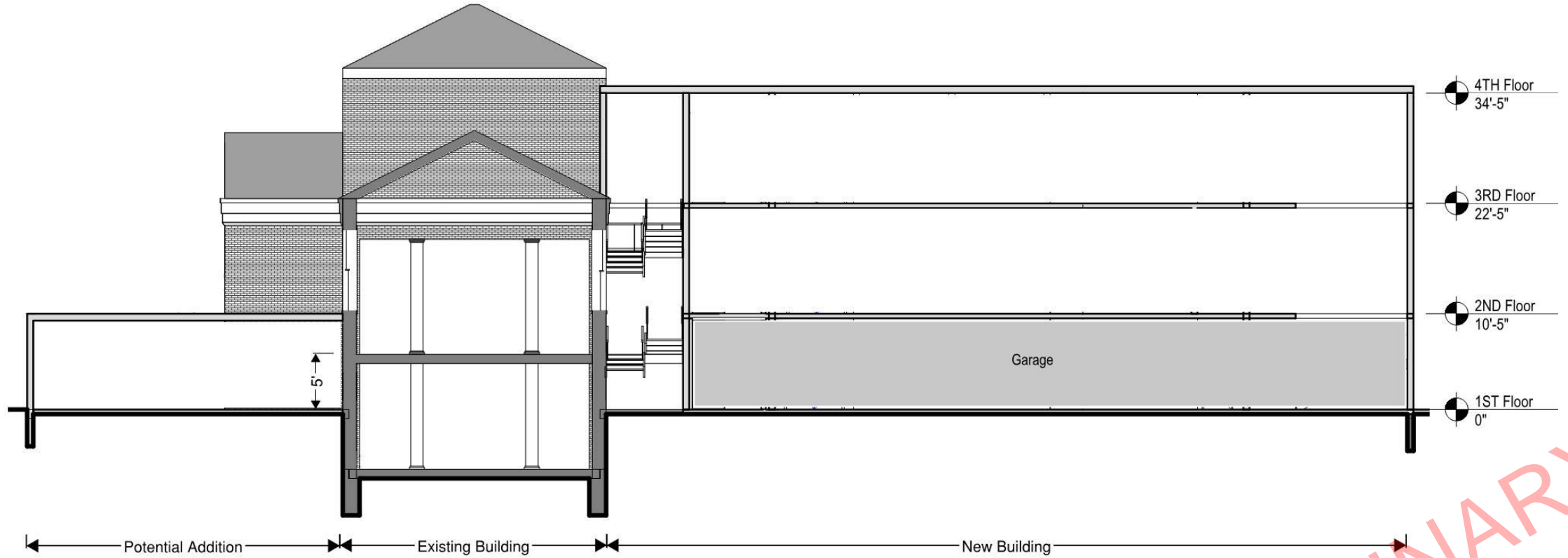
Option 4

NewCal Newton Community Center
Site Plan New Building

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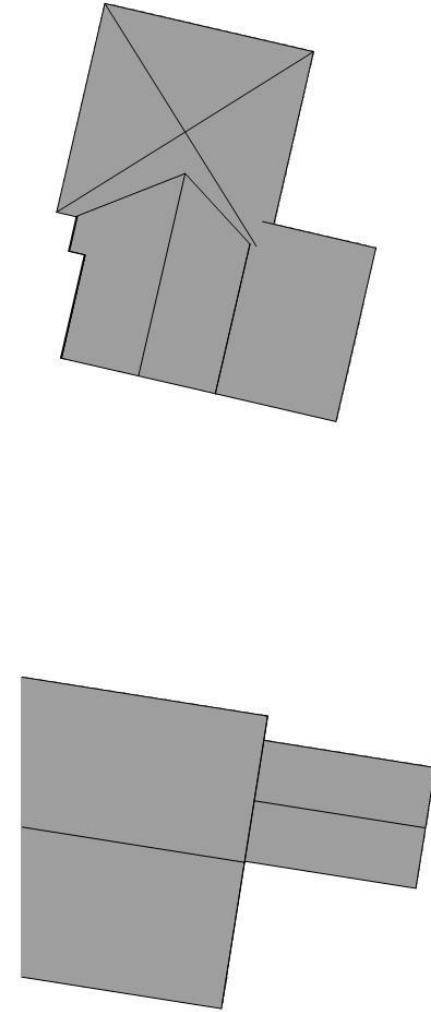
22,850sf Program Area
8,500sf Gym & Track
17,800sf Garage



NewCal Newton Community Center

Building Section

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NewCal Newton Community Center
First Floor Plan

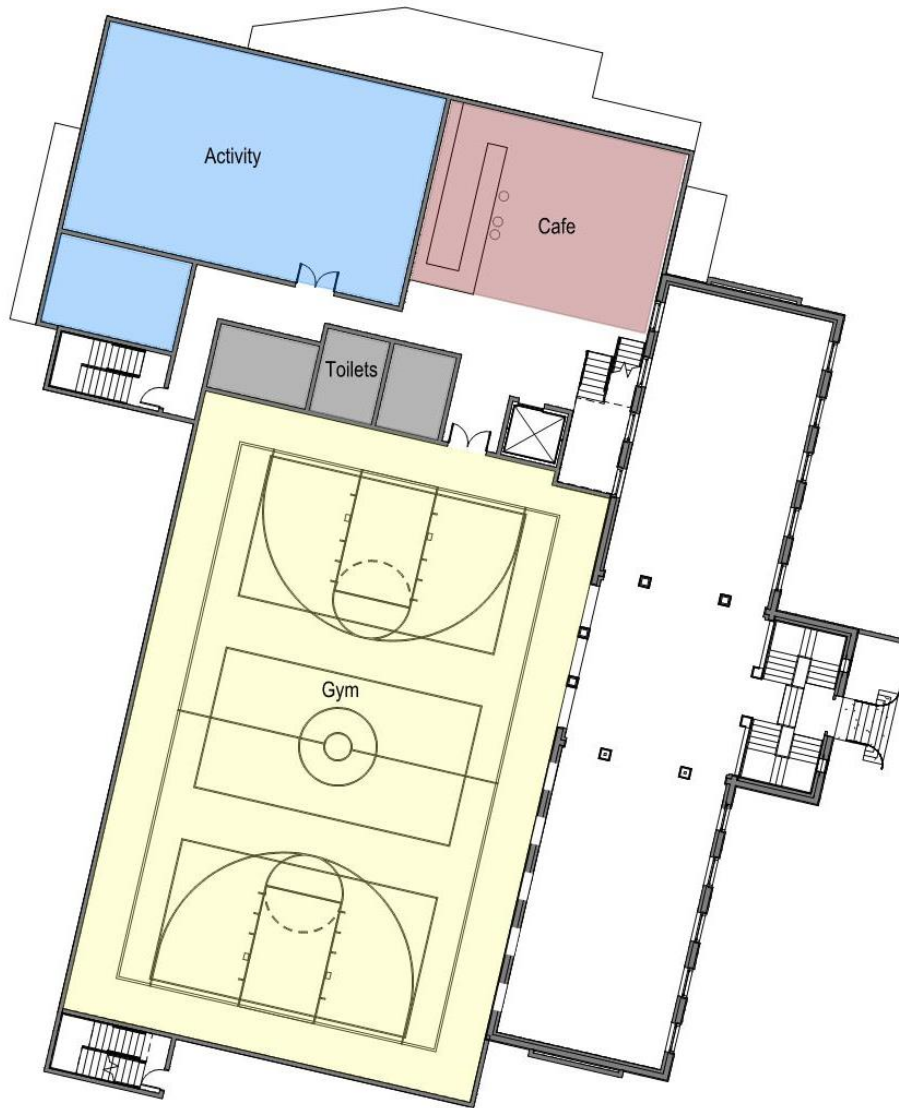
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3,000sf Basement
13,000sf First Floor
6,200sf Garage

Option 1

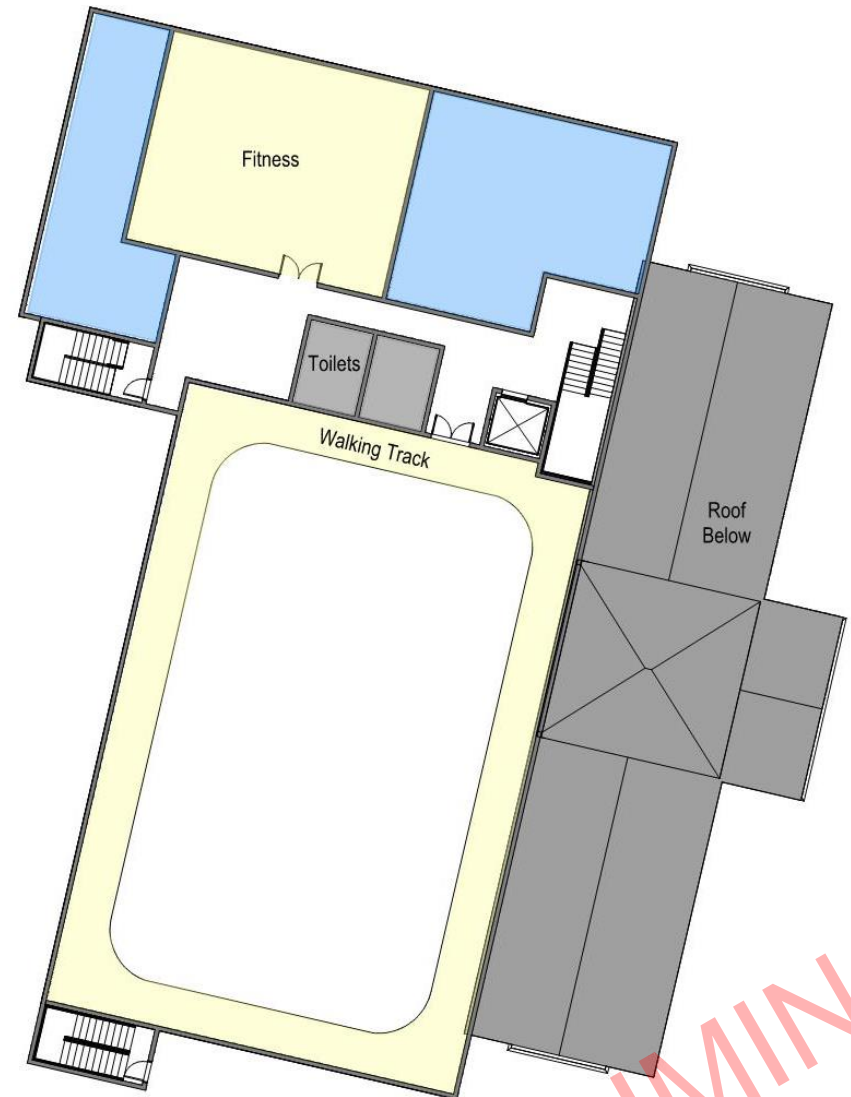
Draft Site Studies Working Group Meeting 3/31/2020



Second Floor Plan 5,000sf Second Floor
6,200sf Track

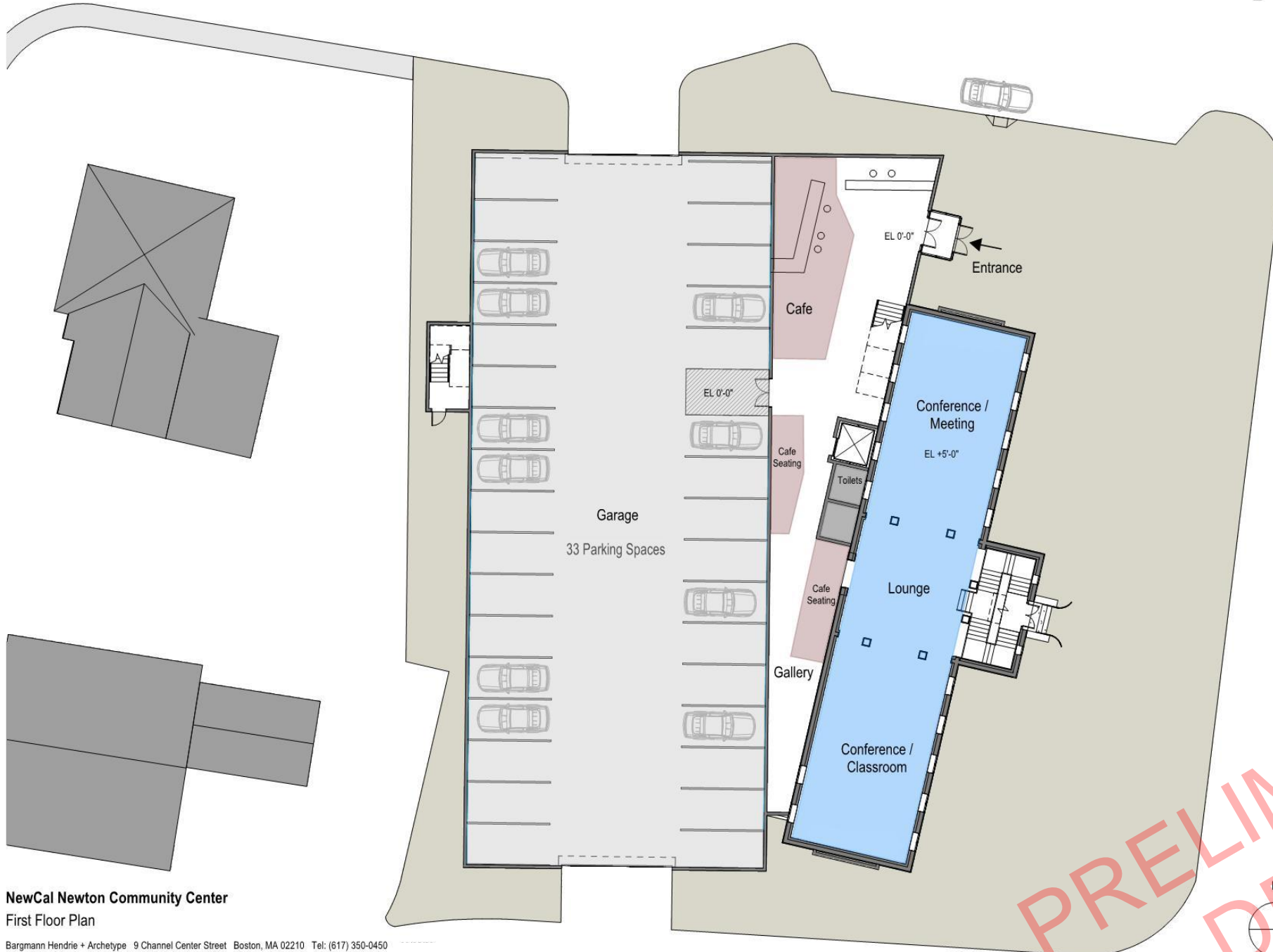
NewCal Newton Community Center
Second Floor Plan

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Third Floor Plan 5,000sf Third Floor
2,300sf Track

Option 1



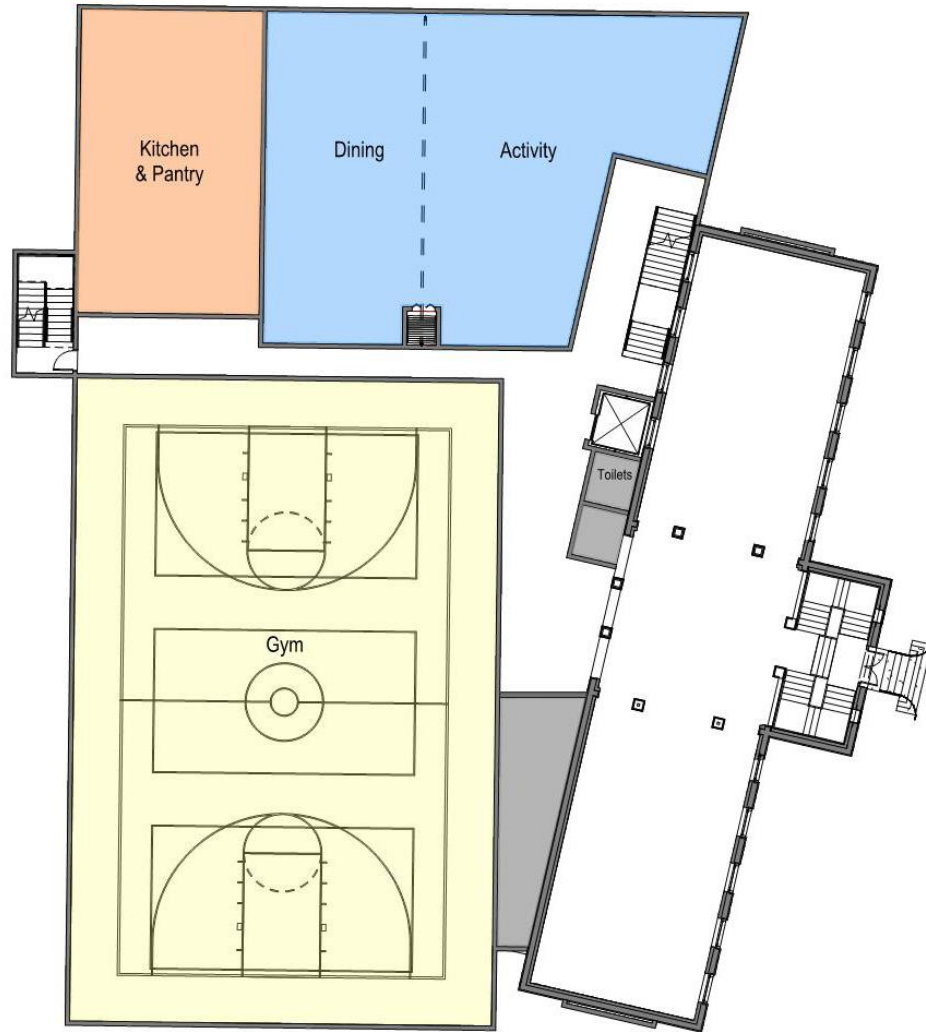
NewCal Newton Community Center
First Floor Plan

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3,000sf Basement
5,500sf First Floor
9,900sf Garage

Option 2

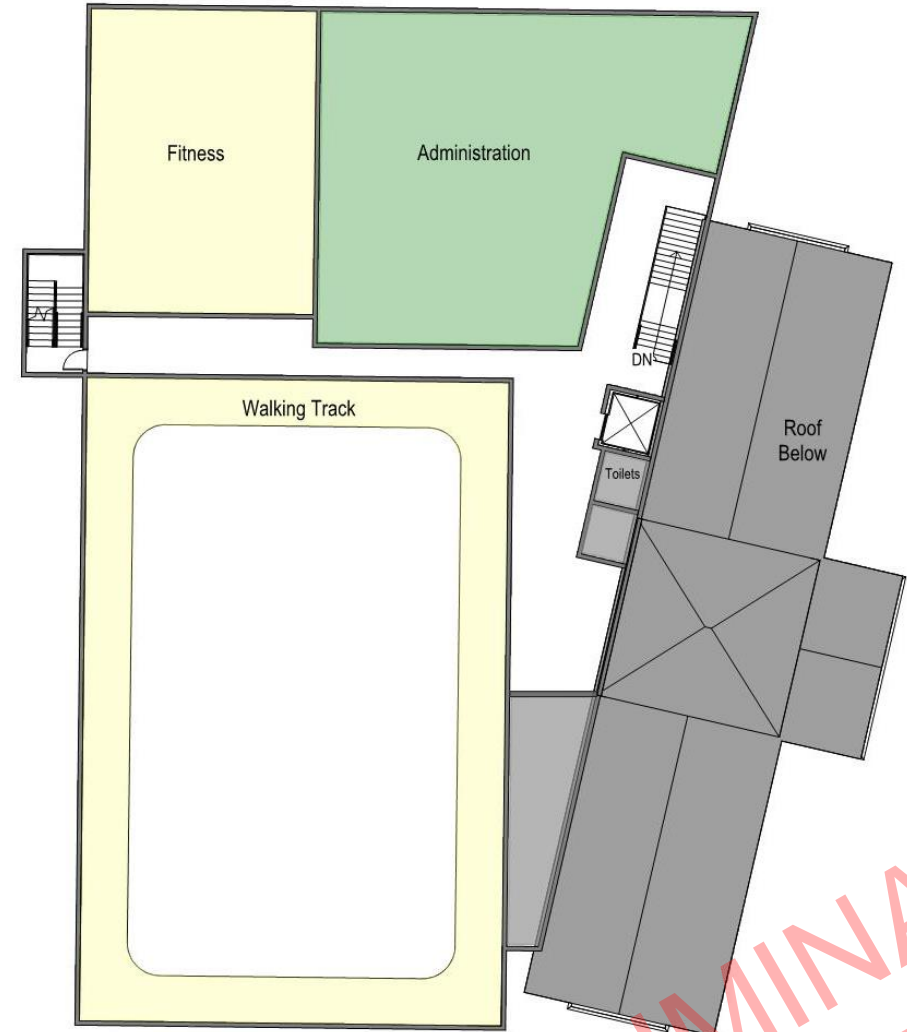




Second Floor Plan 6,775sf Second Floor
6,200sf Gym

NewCal Newton Community Center
Second Floor Plan

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Third Floor Plan 6,775sf Third Floor
2,300sf Track

Option 2



NewCal Newton Community Center
First Floor Plan

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Draft Site Studies Working Group Meeting 3/31/2020

3,950sf First Floor
17,800sf Garage

Option 4



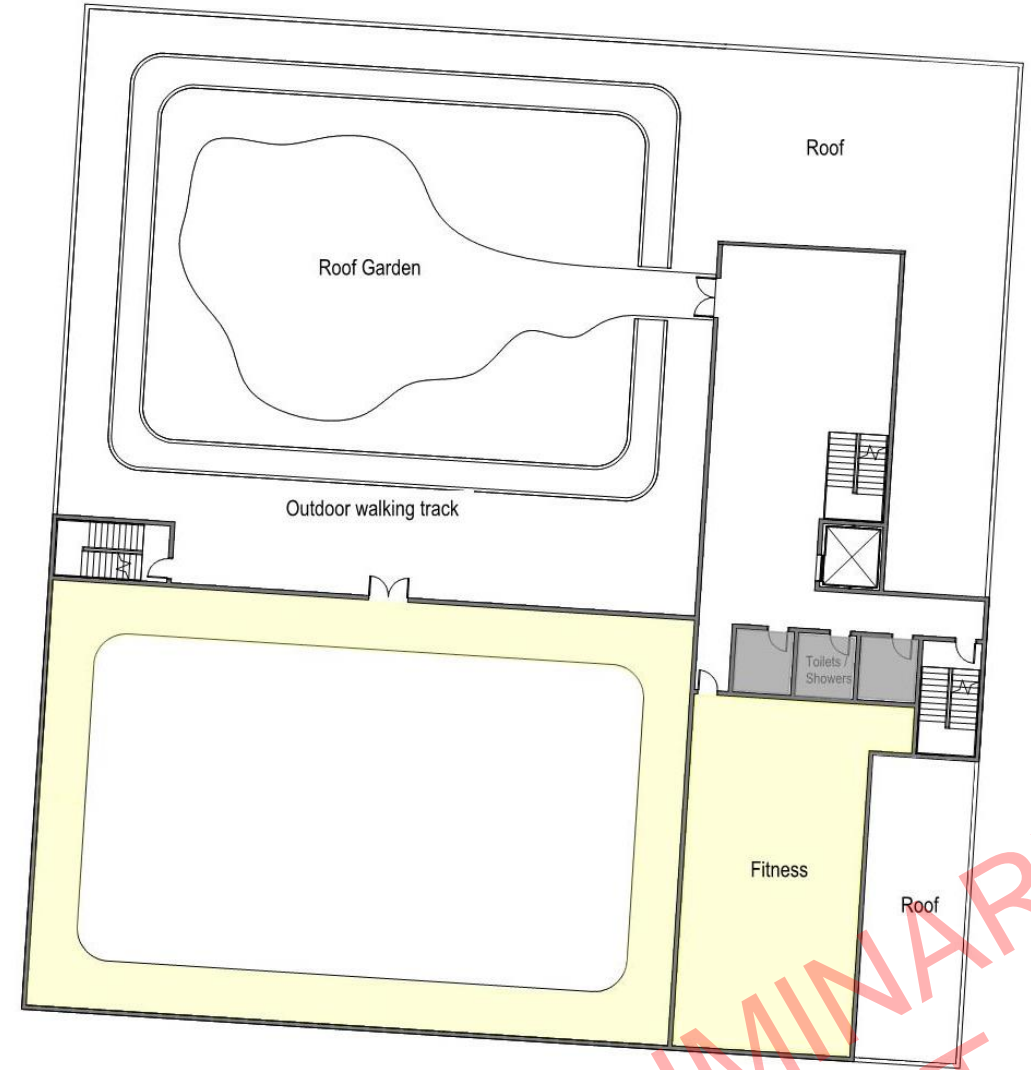
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Second Floor Plan 15,400sf Second Floor
6,200sf Gym

NewCal Newton Community Center
Second Floor Plan

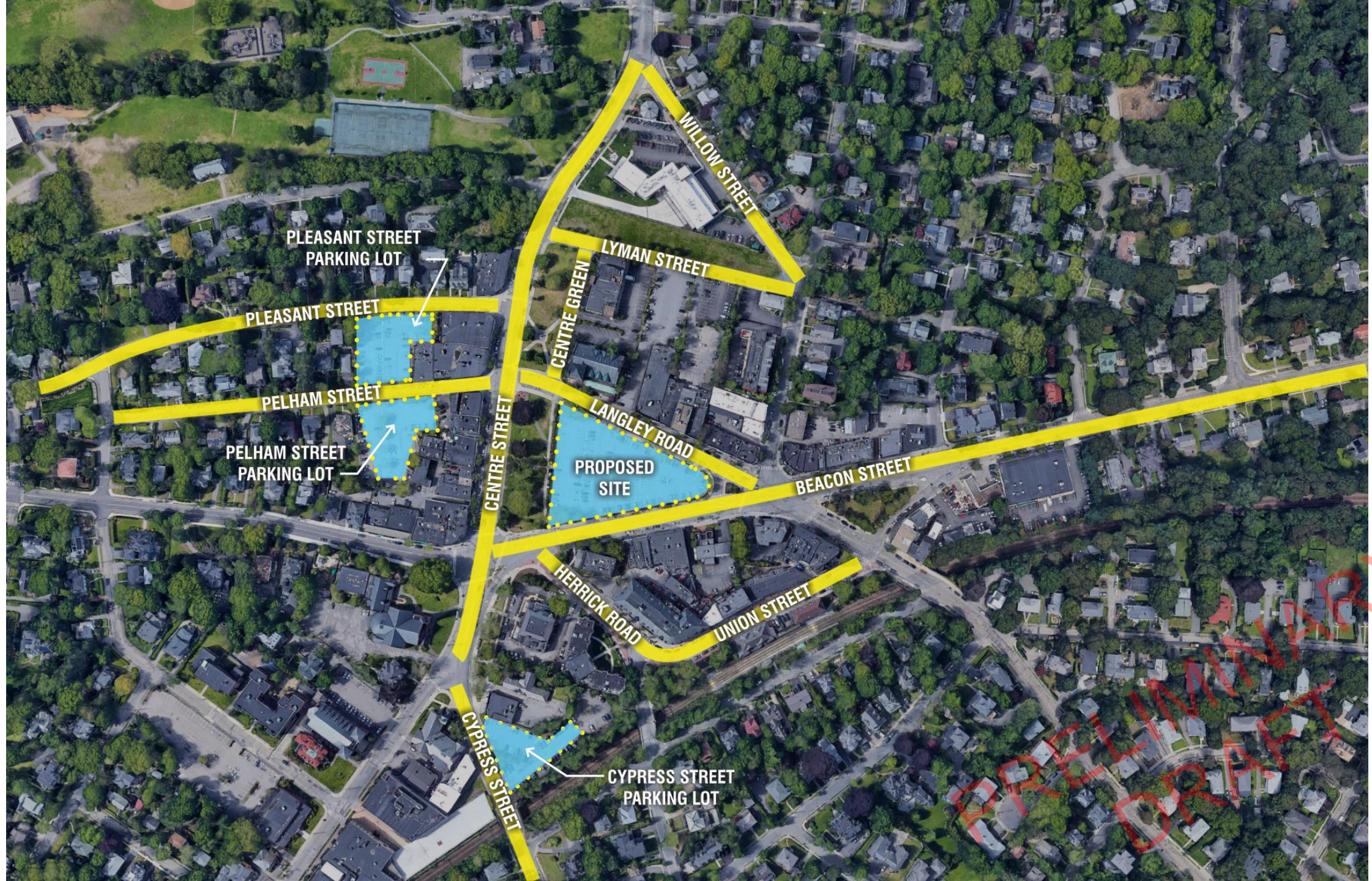
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Third Floor Plan 3,500sf Third Floor
2,300sf Track

Option 4

Draft Site Studies Working Group Meeting 3/31/2020



PLEASANT STREET
PARKING LOT

PLEASANT STREET

PELHAM STREET

PELHAM STREET
PARKING LOT

WILLOW STREET

LYMAN STREET

CENTRE GREEN

LANGLEY ROAD

PROPOSED
SITE

BEACON STREET

HERRICK ROAD

UNION STREET

CYPRESS STREET

CYPRESS STREET
PARKING LOT

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Newton Center Triangle

**Property Information**

Property ID 61030 0014

Location 131 SUMNER ST

Owner FRIEDMAN DAVID & ROBIN



MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT

City of Newton, MA makes no claims and no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the validity or accuracy of the GIS data presented on this map.

Geometry updated 11/09/2018

Data updated 11/14/2018

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