

## Summary Conclusions for NewCAL: Sites not Shortlisted

### **Nahanton Park:**

This parcel is comprised on 56.7 acres in Oak Hill. It ranked very low on the NewCAL Site Selection Matrix for a variety of reasons. The parcel is made up mainly of dense woods and riverfront. Although there are a few open areas, they are currently programmed and not easily moved. The park has a conservation restriction, and it is highly unlikely to be a favorable site for NewCAL by anyone in Newton. Aside from the open space and natural benefits, there are no amenities, village centers, public transportation options, or other supporting elements within a reasonable distance from this site. In addition, the only non-wooded area suitable for siting the new facility is more than a quarter mile from the closest public and utility access point. This site would be cost prohibitive from a development perspective and would likely require years of legal hurdles that may prove insurmountable. For all these reasons, this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **West Suburban YMCA:**

This site is comprised of 6.3 acres in Newton Corner next to the Mass Pike. This site is not controlled by the City of Newton but was raised as a possible site by the YMCA provided both programs could coexist, and certain site challenges could be addressed. Approximately 80% of the site is either undevelopable or has fixed existing assets. Depending on the level of investment, the developable area ranges from 1-1.5 acres. The theory is that NewCAL could be built where the soccer field and track currently exist. This would require elevating these elements to sit above NewCAL. In addition, the YMCA has significantly less parking than they need, and are therefore looking for an expansion of parking as part of the use of this site for NewCAL. The only conceivable method to deliver this is a parking structure built as part of the site development package. Keeping in mind that all these improvements would be subject to public construction, the costs to develop this site, construct NewCAL, and replicate the track and field, would far exceed our project budget. In addition, the location did not have a supporting amenities or close village center. Between the budget and site challenges it is very unlikely that the NewCAL program could be met at this site. For all these reasons, this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Solomon Schechter Playground:**

This site is 2.9 acres and is in Oak Hill directly adjacent to the Solomon Schechter Day School. Based on the size of this site and the site challenges, this entire site would need to be taken over to utilize for NewCAL. This would essentially remove this as an open space asset in its entirety. Replication of the current programs would be extremely challenging in the neighborhood based on limited city-owned assets within a reasonable distance. The very remote location would be a barrier to the senior population. There are no direct street access points to this site, which would mean that most of the parking would have to be located on site. Due to the site constraints it is unlikely that the NewCAL program could be met at this site. Additional consideration was given to the fact that the redevelopment of this site would remove it as a supporting asset to the local community as well as the Solomon Schechter Day School which uses this space as part of their exterior programmatic functions. For all these reasons, this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Ward Park:**

This site is 3.4 acres located in Newton Centre directly adjacent to the Ward Elementary School. Based on the limited street adjacencies, and width of those streets, most of the site would need to be developed to meet the building, parking, and site program. This location lacks amenities or proximity to village centers. The current programs and open space would be very difficult to replicate in the immediate vicinity due to the lack of city-owned assets in the neighborhood. Access to this location would be a barrier due to the remote location and dense neighborhood. For all these reasons, this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Riverside Development:**

This site is 22.5 acres located in Lower Falls directly adjacent to Route 128 and is the site of a proposed mixed-use development. The concept was floated that NewCAL could possibly find a home within the new buildings being proposed at this location. Although the prospect of space provided within this facility as a no-cost community benefit is intriguing, multiple challenges exist. It is unclear if the current proposed Riverside Project will be permitted. It is unclear if this community benefit would be on the table considering the potential mitigation requests in the surrounding neighborhood. It is unclear how long it could take for this project to be

permitted. It is unclear if the project as currently constituted would remain as-is, even if it were eventually permitted. The concept of NewCAL being part of a much larger complex yielded concerns about a loss of distinct identity and could be an overwhelming barrier for some residents. Although the potential development could bring amenities to site, the market may not follow or sustain the development intent. Based on the limitation of the site and the confines of working within a private development asset, programmatic compromises if not sacrifices would likely occur. For all these reasons, this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Lyons Park:**

This site is 3 acres located in Auburndale backing up to the Charles River. The site sits within flood planes from the Charles River, and is located more the 20 feet below the adjacent Commonwealth Avenue grade, 30 feet below the adjacent Islington Road and Regina Road grades. The site is essentially a bowl that sits within a few feet of the Charles River water level. The site is currently used for baseball, and has field lights, stands, and a new field house. It is very actively used. The site is close to Auburndale Square and is quite accessible from a location perspective. However, the site topography would make programmatic accessibility extremely difficult and would yield significant barriers for the users. Additionally, the high-water table and low grade would present significant site development challenges. The current site functions would need to be replicated at another site within the adjacent neighborhood, which although possible, would require significant capital investment. Although it is believed that the NewCAL program could be met at this site, the barriers coupled with the site development challenges yielded the conclusion that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Bowen Upper Playground:**

This site is 6 acres located in Thompsonville on a parcel behind and above the Bowen Elementary School site. Only about 3 acres of this site is developable, and the parcel is long and linear tapering down to less than 100 feet wide at the south end. The only vehicular access to this site is via Langley Path which is very narrow. The lack of adjacent street parking would mean that the entire site would need to be taken to accommodate the NewCAL Program. This would displace the baseball fields, basketball courts, and remaining open space. This is the only open space in

Thompsonville, so replication of the current site functions would need to occur outside of the village. Although the site is in the center of Thompsonville, it does not have the desired adjacent amenities. Access to this location is seen as a potential barrier. The narrow linear site presents development challenges that will require the use of more open space than would otherwise be necessary. Although it is believed that the NewCAL program could be met at this site, the barriers coupled with the site development challenges yielded the conclusion that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Forte Park:**

This site is 6 acres located in Nonantum adjacent to the Charles River. Approximately 4 acres of this site are developable, but the site is completely programmed with a variety of active recreational uses. A formal baseball and soccer field is fully lit with bleachers and supporting parking. Basketball and bocce courts as well as a playground and field house compliment this active field site. Although this location has many attributes that make it attractive based on the evaluation criteria, all the functions on the site would need to be replicated in the neighborhood and based on the land area needed there are no realistic mitigation solutions. Additionally, even if we were able to replicate all these functions elsewhere, the cost to do so would make this site cost prohibitive. Although it is believed that the NewCAL program could be met at this site, the mitigation development costs to replicate the current site functions yielded the conclusion that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Lower Falls Park (Hamilton Playground):**

This site is 8.5 acres located in Lower Falls adjacent to the Lower Falls Community Center. This site has two baseball fields, a soccer field, a playground, basketball and tennis courts, and a community center. The site has the land area to accommodate the full NewCAL program, but the location is remote and has no amenities or village centers in close proximity aside from leaving Newton to visit Wellesley. This is the only open space in Lower Falls, so replication of any current site programming would have to occur outside of Lower Falls. Although it is believed that the NewCAL program could be met at this site, the mitigation development costs to replicate the current site functions, coupled with the inability to replicate

those functions within Lower Falls, yielded the conclusion that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Northland Development on Needham Street:**

This is a 23-acre mixed use development site on the North side of Needham Street in Upper Falls. When the NewCAL site selection process started, it was desired to evaluate whether a few acres of this site could be obtained for the NewCAL project. At this point the project is far enough along that the current plans do not afford the land area needed for NewCAL. For the purposes of this exercise we evaluated the south side of Needham Street where the developer owns property that may be developed with NewCAL included, or potentially acquired. The primary concern with this location is the uncertainty with development, and development schedule, for all the properties in this area. The location itself is close to amenities and a village center, but the traffic and density was a potential barrier to residents. The acquisition of prime commercial property is seen as being cost prohibitive and detracting from our commercial tax base. The possibility of land area being included as part of a future community benefit or mitigation effort, is seen as very uncertain and ties the NewCAL project schedule to a development schedule that doesn't currently exist. Although it is believed that the NewCAL program could be accommodated somewhere at this location, without a tangible schedule or development scenario that includes NewCAL, this site was not seen as a realistic option. Even if an option were to materialize at this location, this site would still not rank in the top tier of options for this project. It for all these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Burr Park:**

This is a 5.1-acre site located in Newton Corner. The site includes a soccer and baseball field, spray park, field house, tennis and volley ball courts. This site has the land area to accommodate the NewCAL program, but it lacks adjacent amenities or village centers. Some street parking would be possible, but most of the parking would need to occur within the open space. Replication of the current site programmatic functions could not occur within Newton Corner. The closest parks where these functions could be replicated are Cabot and Ward Park which are both well removed from Burr Park. It is believed that due to the inability to mitigate the loss of current site programming, obtaining Parks and Recreation Commission or

community support for this site would be very challenging as well as cost prohibitive. It is for these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Warren Lincoln Playground:**

This is a 5.4-acre site located in Waban just outside downtown Waban. Only about 4 acres of the site are developable, but it's anchored by a regulation baseball field with junior soccer fields in the outfield and complimented by a playground. This site is fully programmed, and it would be almost completely taken over if used for the NewCAL Project. The proximity to downtown Waban and public transit is a benefit to this location. The site is accessible and barrier-free. Some of the parking demand could be met by the adjacent streets. The drawback to this site is that there is not enough land area to preserve much open space or park functions for Waban. Although there are other parks in Waban, none of them have the available, unprogrammed, land area needed to replicate the current site functions at Warren Lincoln Playground. It is believed that due to the inability to mitigate the loss of current site programming, obtaining Parks and Recreation Commission or community support for this site would be very challenging as well as cost prohibitive. It is for these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Braceland Playground (Upper Falls Playground):**

This is an 8.8-acre site in Upper Falls adjacent to the east side of the Charles River. The site is broken up into a 3-acre lower field and a 5.8-acre upper field. There is a 26-foot elevation change between the two fields. The lower field sits directly adjacent to the river and has no existing vehicular access. It would be cost prohibitive and very inefficient to build on the lower field. The upper field has a regulation baseball field, junior soccer fields, tennis courts, a field house, parking lot, and small playground. Although this site could accommodate the NewCAL program, replication of the current site programs could not realistically be achieved in Upper Falls. There are only two other city-owned sites in Upper Falls large enough to accommodate these functions. The Emerson Playground is one site, but it is already completely programmed out. The other site is the Elliot Street DPW Yard, but the cost to redevelop and consolidate the buildings and functions at this location would be extremely cost prohibitive. It is believed that due to the inability to mitigate the loss of current site programming,

obtaining Parks and Recreation Commission or community support for this site would be very challenging as well as cost prohibitive. It is for these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **West Newton Commons:**

This is a 3.6-acre site in West Newton which is just slightly to the northwest of the village center. The site includes a regulation baseball field, junior soccer field, fenced playground, and is lined with mature trees along the entire perimeter. To realistically use this site, we would need to replicate all current functions, and there would be little open space left after the NewCAL program was delivered. Although West Newton has a few pocket parks, like Wellington and Davis, none of them have the land area programmed or passive that could accommodate the current functions offered at the Commons. The closest location to replicate these functions would be the fields adjacent to the Burr School in Auburndale. Even though there are significant replication challenges to this site, it is desirable from a location and development perspective. It is close to amenities and a village center. It's accessible and barrier-free, and it has complimentary street parking surrounding the site. However, it is believed that due to the inability to mitigate the loss of current site programming, obtaining Parks and Recreation Commission or community support for this site would be very challenging as well as cost prohibitive. It is for these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Stearns Park:**

This is a 3.4-acre site in Nonantum which contains tennis courts, a basketball court, playgrounds, a junior baseball field, picnic tables, benches, and more than 50 mature on-site trees. To realistically use this site, we would not only need to replicate the active functions, but we would need to remove between 500-1000 caliper inches of trees. Unlike many of the parks in Newton, this park is shaded throughout by mature trees. Replication of the active functions on this site would be extremely challenging, and the passive functions and environmental benefits are nearly impossible to replicate. However, this location has ample street parking, is close to downtown Nonantum, has adjacent amenities, and is barrier-free. It is believed that due to the inability to mitigate the loss of current site programming, and the need to remove so many mature trees, obtaining Parks and Recreation Commission or community support for this

site would be very challenging as well as cost prohibitive. It is for these reasons that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.

### **Cold Springs Park:**

Cold Springs Park (CSP) consists of approximately 67 acres of land located in the geographic center of Newton. It contains the following assets:

- Tennis Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Baseball Field
- Softball Field
- Lacrosse/Soccer/Field Hockey Field
- Life Course and Woods Trails
- Farmers Market
- Off-Leash Dog Park
- Cochituate Aqueduct with trail
- Ample On-site Parking

The park is broken up into New Cold Springs Park which is approximately 8 acres of open space fronting Beacon Street, and Old Cold Springs Park which is approximately 5 acres of open space with access off of Dunklee Street. The remaining 54 acres is dense woods and wetlands, a red maple swamp, Cold Springs Brook, vernal pools, and wonderful habitat for a variety of animal and plant species. CSP is one of the few locations in Newton which offer bird watching opportunities and cross-country skiing.

In the 1930's the city acquired the land and developed the area now identified as Old Cold Springs Park. In the 1983, the city converted the area now identified as New Cold Springs Park from the previous use as a dump.

The entire parcel sits on a peat bog and this layer of peat exists at varying depths throughout the park, including at surface elevations in some areas. Based on the recent Zervas School project to the west, the depth of peat can exceed 20 feet in some areas.

This location is very attractive for the NewCAL project from a location standpoint. It is close to the center of the city and is accessible by varied means of transportation. Old CSP has the land area to support this project, but it is isolated, inaccessible, and not close to amenities attractive to



seniors. New CSP has the land area which could allow for the project development without the loss of programmatic elements, and without the loss of trees. This part of CSP also has ample on-site existing parking and site vehicular circulation. The primary challenge with this site is that even with the existing parking, and programmatic open space synergies, the NewCAL project would still need to develop approximately 1.5 acres of open space. Although the existing park programmatic elements could all be preserved through strategic investment and optimization of open space, the result would still be a net loss of open space. The logical location for project development at this site would require a significant investment in removal of unsuitable soils and structural soil import as well as significant foundation investments. Additionally, with this specific location being used for many years as a dump, the potential exists for significant site cleanup costs. The water table is extremely high in this area as well, so subsurface structures, storm water infrastructure, and/or foundation systems would be challenging and expensive.

#### **Newton Center Playground (not including Tyler Terrace portion):**

This is 14.8-acre site which is in the heart of Newton Center. The playground was acquired for active recreational park and playground purposes through the acquisition of a great number of individual residential parcels. This site meets and exceeds almost all the NewCAL site selection criteria. It is close to amenities and a village center. We can deliver the full program. Through reconfiguration, we can protect and preserve current active park functions on site. We can avoid tree removal almost completely. The new facility could be sited in a way which would create no barriers and would draw residents from all over Newton to enjoy the wonderful park and facilities. The challenge with this site is that it is made up of so many small residential parcels which each have their own deeds, and deed restrictions. It is possible with many years of court proceedings, we may be able to pull together enough of these parcels in one consolidated area to fit NewCAL. The problem is that this could take much longer than we are willing to wait, and even with that we could end up having to start over if we're not successful with the deed restriction issues. This site is wonderful, but it's too much of a longshot to continue to consider, and it's for that reason that this is not the preferred site for the NewCAL Project.