

## Summary Conclusions for NewCAL: Six Shortlisted Sites

Based on the aforementioned evaluations, there are six sites remaining from the 24 sites originally shortlisted for the NewCAL Project. The remaining sites are as follows:

- **Newton Centre Hut (Tyler Terrace)**
- **Weeks Park**
- **Cabot Park**
- **Albemarle Playground**
- **Pellegrini Playground**
- **Richard McGrath Park**

### **Newton Center Hut on Tyler Terrace:**

The Newton Center Hut on Tyler Terrace sits on a 2.5-acre site which is part of the much larger 14.8-acre Newton Centre Playground site. This parcel is extremely close to downtown Newton Center.

The following is a summary of the programmatic functions and elements at the Newton Center Playground:

Large multi-use City park/playground located just outside of the village center

City's first playground, originally designed by Olmsted Bros. firm in 1890

Includes Hammond Brook, Cochituate and Sudbury Aqueducts

Rehabilitation and Accessibility Plan, completed 2006

Jeannete West Recreation Center ("The Hut"): gym, activity rooms, restrooms

Large universal school-age play area with swings, fenced pre-school play area with swings

City's only clay tennis courts (5), with practice backboard

Regulation baseball field, junior baseball field (Jay Gordon Field), elementary soccer fields (2), and full basketball court (lights)

On-street parking, accessible route from Mason-Rice School parking lot

Off-leash recreation area

The 2.5-acre site being analyzed currently houses limited park functions. Aside from the Hut Field House, this space is used for sledding in the

winter, emergency access to the rear of the Mason Rice Elementary School, and passive recreation. This parcel does present some site challenges in that there is a 24-foot elevation change dropping down from Tyler Terrace to the north as you approach the rear of the parcel.

This location is attractive for several reasons. It is very close to a village center and local amenities. It is very accessible, centrally located, and users would be able to benefit from the tremendous amount of park elements and programs which already exist. Although there would be opportunities at this site for complimentary street parking, it would at times be in direct conflict with the school parent parking during drop-off and pickup as well as compete with local business employees and customers looking for parking near Newton Center. Some on-site parking could be created, but this would likely be limited to 20-30 spaces, so a parking management plan would need to be created to address this programmatic need. Based on the topography site development costs would be expensive, but this would be offset by not needing to recreate any lost active recreational park elements. Portions of this parcel are within the riverfront protection area, so a project at this location would be subject to Conservation Commission review and approval, and mitigation may be needed. The Hut itself would be subject to the Historical Commission review, and would likely require a Demolition Review, which would likely yield a Demolition Delay. The building is in very poor condition both inside and out. All the building systems are beyond useful life and many are beyond repair. The building is programmatically inaccessible and cannot be made accessible. That said, the Hut does provide space for the Mason Rice afterschool program, Parks and Recreation camps, and a variety of active recreational programming. These functions would need to be either relocated, included in the new facility, or a combination of the two.

This map shows the entire Newton Center Park including the Mason Rice School:



This map shows the Newton Center Hut on Tyler Terrace parcel:



## Weeks Park:

Weeks Park is a 15-acre site in Newton Centre located southeast of Crystal Lake adjacent to the Weeks House, which was previously the Weeks Junior High School. The building was built in 1930, placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, and is currently operated by the Newton Community Development Foundation as 75 units of housing. The 15-acre site includes the Weeks House building, parking lots, and grounds, which makes up approximately 2.5 acres. For the purposes of the NewCAL siting process, this analysis is focused on the 12.5 acres that makes up Weeks Park.

Weeks Park current programs and elements:

Multi-use City park with well-landscaped raised berm area with benches/game tables

Irrigated softball fields (2), regulation soccer/lacrosse/field hockey fields (3) and tennis courts (4)

Large wood play chair sculpture (up on hill)

Fenced pre-school play area with bucket swings

Parking lot and on-street parking; no pathways

This site is very close to downtown Newton Center, is close to amenities and public transportation, and is extremely accessible. The site offers complimentary street parking, and possible shared parking opportunities with the Weeks House. The site would be very simple from a development perspective. The site has multiple access points from a variety of adjacent streets and is walkable, and easily accessed by varied means of transportation. It is unknown at this time if any trees would need to be removed, but if this needed to occur it would be very minimal as the site is very open. The challenges with this site are the fact that it is heavily programmed and very actively used. There is very little impervious space on this park, so the NewCAL Project would be a direct loss of open green space. The current programs and elements could be preserved through a master plan and implementation strategy that reoriented the site such that space was created for the NewCAL facility. The most efficient use of the site for NewCAL purposes would be to site the new facility at either the very southern or northern ends of the park.





## Cabot Park:

Cabot Park is 11.6 acres located to the east of Newtonville, south of the Mass Pike, and northwest of the Cabot Elementary School. The southern half of the park is completely programmed out for recreational field activities. The northern portion of the park is fully programmed with an off-leash dog park, bocce, tennis, and basketball courts. The center of the park contains the Cabot Park Field House trails and play structures. Although this part of the park has significant land area not currently programmed, it also has a grove of very mature healthy trees.

Cabot Park was created in 1893 through a series of land conveyances of multiple parcels, by multiple owners.

Cabot Park current programs and elements:

Large active-use City park, adjacent to Cabot Elementary School

Little League baseball field , softball field, regulation baseball field, soccer/football field

Bocce courts (4), tennis courts (2) and lighted full basketball court

Small recreation field house with accessible restrooms (2)

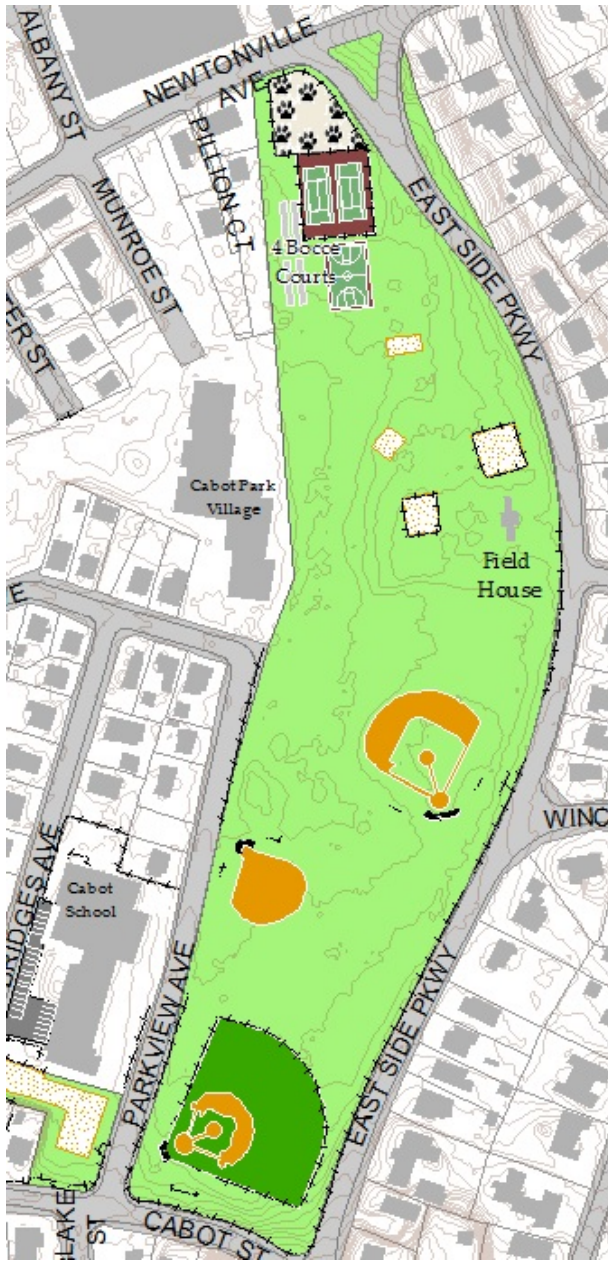
Swing areas (2), school-age play apparatus, and fenced pre-school play area

On-street parking; level site, no walkways

Off-leash recreation area (fenced)

This location is attractive based on the current on-site programmatic elements and offerings, complimentary street parking, reasonable accessibility by varied means of transportation, and relative proximity to amenities for seniors. There are two realistic site options, with one at the north end of the park, and the other being sited in the center or middle of the park. The northern option would require the relocation of the off-leash dog park, bocce courts and tennis courts and would impact the basketball courts and some trees. If the preservation of these elements on this site was deemed a priority, the passive areas in the center of the park would need to be utilized for replication of these elements. If the facility were to be sited in the center of the park, the field house would need to be incorporated into the facility design, the play elements would need to be relocated, and there would be significant loss of mature trees and tree canopies. The northern option seems to be the most realistic, but even with

this option there is a net loss of more than 2 acres of open space when you consider the total project impact and impacted element replication efforts.



## **Pellegrini Park:**

Pellegrini Park is a 4.7-acre park located very close to the center of Nonantum.

### **Hawthorne Field House (Pellegrini) 17 Hawthorne Street**

Built in 1950, this is a 5,752 square foot building that consists of a gym, bathrooms, kitchen, and storage. This facility provides space for after school and summer programs, basketball, volleyball, and pickleball recreational leagues, and support for the adjacent playground and fields.

## **Pellegrini Park**

Small neighborhood park/playground, with Master Plan (2005)

City memorial site with flagpole

Tennis court, Pickle Ball Court, lighted softball field and soccer field

Large picnic area, pre-school and school age play areas, spray pool and swings

Home to the St. Mary of Carmen Festival, held in July

Parking lot and on-street parking

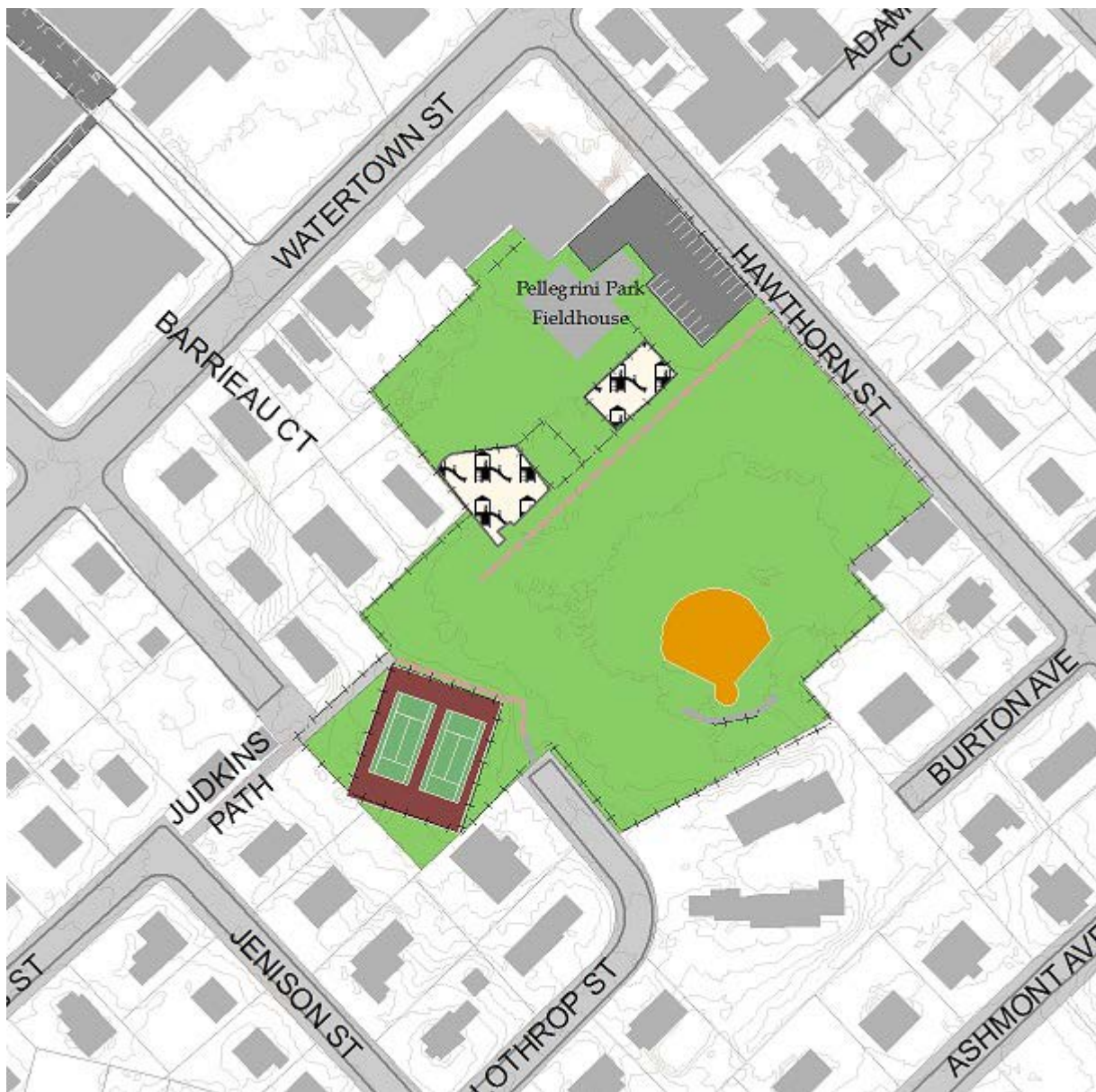
Pellegrini Park is made up of approximately 1 acre of hardscape as defined as the parking lot, building, vehicular circulation, and impervious play area. The remaining 3.7 acres is made up of active and passive green space except for two tennis courts on the southwest corner of the park. The softball and soccer fields take up most of the park.

This site is close to a village center and amenities, has direct access to passive and active recreational space, and is accessible and close to public transportation. Use of this site would require no tree removal, and it would replace an aging field house facility with the ability to replicate all the community benefits it currently affords. The site development would be very simple and inexpensive. If this site were used, the theory is that the facility and parking would need to stay on the 1 acre of current hardscape. The challenge with this site is that even if a 3-story NewCAL facility were designed, the footprint would still consume approximately half an acre, which would not leave enough space on the site to accommodate the parking demands of NewCAL which would be shared by the demands of park-goers as well. Compounding this issue is that Hawthorne Street is only 22 feet wide, and although street parking is permitted currently, the addition of parking demands to the adjacent streets would surely present problems for both the users as well as the neighborhood.



It is believed that this site could support the full NewCAL program, except for on-site parking. The program calls for 75 parking spaces, and this site could not reasonable accommodate more than 40 parking spaces.

To be clear, if this site were to be used for the NewCAL Project, the current field house would need to be demolished, the new facility built in its place, and the current field house functions would need to be replicated within the new facility. This is the only way to deliver the NewCAL Project at this site, preserve the current park functions, and not take open green space.



## **Richard McGrath Park:**

This is a 10.6-acre site located in West Newton surrounding the Warren House, which is the former Warren Junior High School which was built in 1926 and is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The school closed in the early 1980's, and the building was converted to 59 units of mixed income housing in 1992 by the Newton Community Development Foundation who continues to oversee the housing development. As part of the transition to the current use, the school and park parcels were split. The Warren House parcel is an additional 3.7 acres, which includes the southwest parking area which is City-owned and provides parking for the park.

Richard McGrath Park current programmatic elements:

Large active-use City park with playfields and courts

Soccer/lacrosse fields (3), football field, junior baseball fields (2), tennis courts (7)

Fenced pre-school play area

Parking lot with handicap accessible spaces, no walkways

Off-leash recreation area, fenced

This park has a tremendous amount of active use and programming but is also one of the largest parks in Newton, and therefore provides opportunities for reconfiguration of park elements to potentially free up enough land area to accommodate the full NewCAL program. The positives of this location are that it can fully accommodate the NewCAL program with complimentary parking on the Myrtle Street, as well as the potential for shared parking opportunities in the existing on-site parking lot. The site is accessible and is simple and inexpensive from a development perspective. The challenges with this site are that it is very removed from village centers and amenities. The site will also require some tree removal, and the land area needed would come exclusively from current open space. To be clear, the use of this site would not require use of the Warren House property, and the analysis has focused exclusively on the McGrath Park property.

