

## Town Meeting Campus Projects Feedback: March 2018

**Comments on Feedback Forms answering the question:** *What is the most important thing you want the Campus Projects Committees to focus on?*

### **Comments from those who preferred Campus Plan 1:**

- Full Program Concept. I'm aesthetically drawn to the L-shaped campus, but think optimized function should ultimately drive form, so would be open to compact shape with preference for Plan # 2 if it is better for achieving optimal educational benefits.
- Fix, update what is necessary. Build a Dining Room & Kitchen
- **Cost** and keeping current plan since it WORKS!
- How to develop 1 or 2 options with a budget limit of about \$85/\$90M
- I feel the L2 concept provides the best balance between cost and programming
- Cost
- An improvement to Lincoln's quality of life for the entire community (young/old, family/solo...) At this point I feel Scheme L.2 presents the **greatest Value** to the town. It includes Pre-K, centralized dining, added FLEX spaces, centralized entrance w/ improved security and potential for an updated image...at an estimated cost that doesn't unduly compromise the community Center initiative or unknown future priorities & needs for Lincoln. Thank you!!!!
- Spend the least amount and bring the school up to code. I went to school here, was a student here and my youngest graduated here in 2006. For me, what is important for a good education are the teachers and the administration.
- What about using Smith Gym, renovate it as Community Center? Really incompatible with school use at Smith?
- Reducing the cost of the project. Pay attention to "must-haves" vs "nice to have". For example, kids in Central America walk miles to school each day. Spending \$\$ so kids don't have to walk outside to go to gym is not a good use of \$\$.
- Value
- Phased approach with increments every 5-15 years. Give future generations something to talk about and work on for next 30 years!
- Higher level renovation, not just "repair"
- L2. Let's maximize the educational program improvements AND be as responsible as we can be financially
- Cost
- Preserve the special feel & appearance of the campus with a great school that accentuates these town values
- Costs, including per pupil cost of the building, borrowing costs, cost of living in the Town of Lincoln, cost of tax bill (some of which may no longer be deductible), affordability to less affluent residents now and in the future (lack of attracting less affluent residents), costs we are saddling future residents with, etc. And when comparing costs of our school and community center to other towns, remember that Lincoln has a small taxpayer base. "Renovation/Reuse is the most profound form of sustainability" (See Community Center Planning handout)
- Affordability
- Educational mission & cost
- Consider separating school renovations from Community Project. Prioritize schools!

- L2 with solar & net-Zero. Most important: Net zero planning, maintaining or increasing field space
- L3
- Have a separate vote on June 9 for the school and the community center designs.
- Remember the most expensive building does not necessarily provide the best education to students.
- We need to manage a reasonable budget
- Like Plan 1 with more creative planning than shown so far. Honor Lincoln's history AND improve educational spaces – work on a plan in the \$78-\$80 M range.

### Comments from those who preferred Campus Plan 2:

- Efficient & effective use of space that creates a school for the future educational needs of our community, that's energy efficient & blends education & community needs
- Open views, connect students to outdoors & preserve trees. Use glass & wetland/walks/trails to increase walkability to school. Make it beautiful for students & teachers. Net-Zero FOR SURE. Hanscom pods are a great idea but it feels like a warehouse. Do reuse old wooden furniture & plants & fabric inside. Make it feel comfortable, welcoming. Not like an unstructured "ever-changeable" warehouse. There needs to be a feeling of arrival & a "There" there. The modular furniture is fine in SOME places but not everywhere. Lots of small rooms may be educational fad now – but keeping some flexibility is a good idea. Consideration of ONGOING maintenance needs to be part of the design discussion. The current maintenance level **will not be sufficient**.
- Do not decrease the field space. This is integral to school, healthy exercise, etc.
- Compact building makes the most sense. Cost lower and green space higher.
- I like the compact plan and complete new school. Extra field is great – and the Community Center should not be in the old Smith spot.
- Education – This is a core Lincoln value and central to our future. How can we possibly not do everything possible?
- Long-run adequacy of the expansion/upgrade (growth capacity, ease of possible future reconfiguration)
- Highest priority: Educational Program. Second priority: Sustainability/Environment/Green building. Thanks for considering all at once.
- Low long term operating cost. School that lasts 75-100 years.
- Bring Pre-K into the building
- Compact Footprint, educational improvements, and sustainability. Let's get the project done now with the school as the priority.
- Focusing on lower capital & operating costs OVER TIME. We need to be smart in our investments. We need addition field space. Every year, for example, we can't keep purchasing a new police car. It would be great to couple these projects for community center & school together for a bond. We have to have a thorough & thoughtful plan of ongoing maintenance before we make any decisions for either the school or the community center.
- I support a Full Concept Program that **FULLY supports educational goals** in an optimal way. I support hubs & the optimal amount of square footage to keep pace with innovations in education. (BTW, I don't have children in school here but I am willing to fund this, whatever it takes.)

- This plan best “holds” our LPS educational vision! These summary points effectively focus on where our community priorities ought to be with this project. We’ll reap what we pay for...
- Educational Vision for 21st Century learning. We need to stop giving our kids less than we believe we should be giving them. School must be our priority.
- Looks the very best
- Net Zero/Sustainability
- Improve educational experience. Maintain # of Playing fields.
- Vote School Concept first, then Community Center
- Educational Impact
- Lean to Plan 2. Love Net-Zero, field space & overall care about **commons**, flex spaces & full kitchen!
- Prefer Plan 2 but can be flexible as long as these pieces are the focus: Educational Vision – hubs and flexible space and full kitchen for schools.
- Green building design/Sustainability/Energy Efficiency
- Access to Outside learning spaces, wetlands, woods, fields
- Lower operating costs & most compact shape
- Field space is important for active & healthy children
- GET IT DONE!!!!
- Please separate the Community Center to be approved as a separate item and budget. School comes first!
- Education
- We must be able to consider school district first & separate from Community Center
- Traffic flow (amazingly) in Plan B too much central parking is between the school buildings. Exhaust, unnecessary traffic through the core of the design, more cars moving across traffic. Walking is still healthy. Put it back outside the core. Energy Efficient. **Solar** Thank you!
- The schools (i.e. let’s put off the Community Center). Despite attending meetings on both over the last x years, it is still unclear why the Fincom & Selectmen have not provided guidance/leadership on what is fiscally prudent to take on, whether there is really no difference over the long run in doing both, or what our priorities should be. Why shouldn’t they be decoupled? (I neither have children in schools presently nor need of or interest in the Community Center)
- Net Zero seems important but would like to see the analysis
- Please stop making arguments about how long the children have to walk from one building to another. The timing I understand but it is good for children to get outside & walk. My children loved that part of their day when at Lincoln Schools.
- I care that the educational programmatic changes are made in the new school (e.g. breakout spaces for small groups, larger meeting spaces, etc). The compact school shape seems like a much more efficient use of space. I prefer the community Center to be near Hartwell to preserve open field space.
- Spend today to lower future operating costs. Design for energy efficiency. Focus on flexibility for future pedagogical/curricula change
- As far as design of the school – sustainability and net zero (**not just net zero ready**) As far as the project in general: LEADERSHIP; the value proposition needs to be explained and measured – otherwise, a \$49M project does not compete nicely with a \$100M project.
- New School

- Keep the Community Center in Hartwell under Scheme 3 for sustainability aspect and keeps traffic using this facility from mixing too much with school. Prefer Plan 2 because:
- Lower capital & operating costs over time and it opens up additional field space
- Why pay \$50M for a couple of Band-Aids when \$100M would get Lincoln a much more up-to-date and effective school? Short-term fixes, especially for something as important as the town PreK-8 school, cost more in the end because they just kick the can down the road. Construction costs are NOT going to go down. I am 67 years old and have no children in the system, they're grown and gone. Bud good schools are still a **top** priority to me. And I moved to Lincoln just over a year ago, and the sense I have of the community's commitment to high civic standards and responsibility is one of Lincoln's great attractions.
- Balance cost with enabling top tier educational programming. Guard against student growth risk, perhaps with planned but unbuilt extension options.
- Balancing cost, new educational spaces, new green space and community center.
- New compact school suitable for education in the 21st Century. Additional playing fields, Energy efficient.
- Community Center should be separate
- Getting something approved, all of these options are better than doing nothing.
- Educational Value
- Put more hubs into Option C – get the most value (educational value) out of this project. FPC a more compact plan & add fields. Town meeting was full today. Please think about how to facilitate more people on June 9<sup>th</sup>. There are not many families here, plan on many more June 9<sup>th</sup>. Stream in Gym? How to count votes? Extra space/electronic voting
- That the School and Community Center are built and designed to do the best job possible in their functions. That the project is built for **Net Zero**
- Educational Gains
- Shortest construction period possible (minimizes disruption & escalating construction costs) AND expand fields space
- Optimal School Program!!!
  - #1. Compact 2 story all new construction. \$100M is OK
  - #2. Add another soccer/play field – high priority
  - #3 – Vote School Building separate from Community Center & vote School Budget first
  - #4. Save space for Community Center for 10 years from now, not now
- 1. School Vote detached from Community Center vote, such that I can vote \$100M for School and zero for Community Center. 2. Compact 2 story school building to maximize efficiency and creation of field space. 3. New Construction prioritized over renovation because it lasts longer. So spend the \$100M
- New Field = No-brainer
- Prefer Plan 2 because has better parking. Prefer lower cost community center, as space is available in meeting rooms at the Commons, Oriole Landing & churches.
- Lower the cost below \$100M total
- Efficiency; long reliable life before renovations are needed.

## Comments from those who did not indicate a campus layout preference:

- I could favor any of these plans. More important to me is that we design a modern, XXXXXX, flexible school. FPL is the best plan for this, but I think a more imaginative version could be even better.
- Plan 1 is best for cost. Cost control – Keep Pre-K in Harwell to reduce needed square feet in Smith/Brooks and separate youngest children from older ones. Combined initial construction and long term operating/energy. Plan 2 is best for benefits of the layout.
- Would like the choice to be the one with the lowest impact on property taxes, meaning the choice that raises property taxes THE LEAST. We should vote on campus plans **before** voting on Community Center
- Current & future cost in regards to growth, maintenance & using resources. Cost increase of \$3000 per year to existing tax levy is a deal breaker. Need a more cost-effective solution. This is unaffordable!!!
- Plan 1 & Plan 2. “No” to Plan 3. Choose compromise options and vote 2 projects in one vote.
- Whichever plan, do both School & Community Center **together**. And within \$100M limit on borrowing.
- Some of us are inclined to vote yes for any educational issue. It would help if you can identify the educational **loss** for each diminishment from the maximum plan.
- Random thoughts: I want taxpayer money to be spent on the school and not do the community center. We’ve paid a lot to renovate Bemis Hall for use by the Council on Aging. I’m very concerned about combining the school with other purposes. There’s already enough traffic going to the school. It makes no sense to have the vast majority of the traffic going to one place. In truth, it causes me to think that there will be more traffic where students are going to school and playing outside. Judging by the way people drive at the transfer station, I’m concerned that students will be endangered. I like the compact footprint – from a safety point of view – easier for police to help, but I’m not sure that would get approved because of the cost. At the Special Town meeting, give information on tax impacts & how the 2018 tax law limiting our SALT deductions to \$10,000. Also, if worst comes to worst and we have to have a community center, keep it as separate from the school as possible. I appreciate all of the work done on the school project and want it to happen!
- While I generally like the idea of one efficient building, instead of a spread out, higher operating cost, complex, I like the idea of separating grades K-4 from 5-8. While I am confident that all Lincoln children are perfect (yeah, right), I really don’t want the older kids to bully the younger ones. Separating them reduces the opportunity for bullying by bigger kids. Maybe the school has methods for keeping them apart within the same building, and I just don’t know what those methods are. But could you please include this thinking? When I was in Junior High School (grades 7-9, in Newton), there were UP staircases, and DOWN staircases, to reduce collisions and bullying actions. No BIG kid could shove a little kid -- as the BIG kid came down while the little kid was going up. I was that little kid, and directional staircases protected me. [Of course the novel, *Up the Down Staircase*, by Bel Kaufman, is one of the great pieces of contemporary American literature, with especially poignant things to say about the role of women in the workforce, but that’s irrelevant. What is relevant is the need for UP and DOWN staircases.]

## **COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER TOWN MEETING**

- There were no forms left at Town Meeting when I tried to get one, so thank you for your message in Lincoln Talk about filling one out! I favor Option #2. I am most interested in a Net Zero Energy building. I feel that we really have no other choice because Lincoln has stated energy goal obligations. I also feel that the SBC, Selectmen, and School Committee need to give the town more guidance and direction on the best school building options. You are the ones who are the experts! We can give you our thoughts, but you have researched and thought about this extensively, so you need to lead us. Thank you for all your hard work.
- Most important focus: cost/cost-effectiveness.
- I do not support the options that are designated as “full program, FPC” that include hub space for grades K, 1 and 2. I feel that this additional space drives what is already an extremely costly project to untenable cost levels. The Fincom has told us that they feel that total borrowing for the school and community center projects above \$100 million could jeopardize our AAA bond rating. If that occurs, the higher interest rates on the debt would make the total project cost even higher than the initial price tag would suggest. The impact on property taxes of a \$95 million school building project is extreme enough and will be difficult for many of us to absorb. In addition, I question the value of the hubs for K-2. I am not convinced that young children, such as those entering kindergarten, will benefit from access to a hub as opposed to spending their classroom time in a more stable unchanging single classroom setting. I urge the SBC to drop these options from consideration prior to the June 2018 special town meeting.

## **Questions posed by a resident after Town Meeting for consideration by the two committees:**

- What is Lincoln's experience with the impact on the town's character when the tax rate increase increases by 20% or more at one time? I think this has happened at least once before, but can't recall the circumstances. Can we draw any conclusions?
- Has anyone involved in the project made any observations about the impacts on people, culture, and values of this type of property tax increase?
- Who might move out or into town as a result?
- What other potential future capital projects will not happen as a result of the limit on our future bonding capacity if we go up to and above the maximum state limit for these projects?
- What benefits other than educational and recreational will accrue to town residents as a result of the project? I'm thinking of impact on property values, the need for other government structures, or demand for municipal services.