

NEW CANAAN LONG RANGE PLANNING MUNICIPAL AND PUBLIC USE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Public Workshop and Open House Summary Report

Prepared for:
Town of New Canaan Long Range Planning Committee

Prepared by:
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**NEW CANAAN LONG RANGE PLANNING
MUNICIPAL AND PUBLIC USE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN
OPEN HOUSE AND PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT**
New Canaan, Connecticut

Prepared on behalf of:

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I. INTRODUCTION

In October 2010 the Town of New Canaan's Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) hired consultants Perkins Eastman and BFJ Planning in association with Wesley Stout Associates to assist the Town in developing a scope of work for a Municipal and Public Use Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan). The purpose of this project, referred to as Phase 1 of the Master Plan, was to work closely with the committee and the public to determine the facilities and issues that should be evaluated for renovation and/or relocation as part of an overall Master Plan for the town's municipal and public use facilities.



Included in this analysis were facilities located in the downtown area, such as Town Hall, the Library, the Fire Department, Vine Cottage, the Teen Center, the movie theater, and other Town-owned buildings and facilities. In addition to these centrally located facilities, the Phase 1 evaluation also included review of facilities at Waveny and Irwin Parks and related topics such as senior housing, downtown parking, and pedestrian circulation.



As part of Phase 2, which commenced in May 2011, the town, through the work of the LRPC, will develop a comprehensive capital plan for the execution of essential municipal projects to meet the long-term needs of the town via a Master Plan.

Phase 2 includes the following tasks:

- Analysis of program requirements
- Alternative options for existing facilities
- Public Workshop to evaluate alternatives
- Impact analysis and recommendations
- Draft Plan
- A Public Forum on the Draft Plan
- Final Plan
- Executive Summary



On June 27, 2011, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) held an Open House and Public Workshop at the New Canaan Town Hall

Auditorium regarding the Master Plan for the town facilities (including the library, a private organization). Over 100 participants attended the Open House session and Public Workshop. At the Open House, participants had the opportunity to see and discuss preliminary facility alternatives amongst one other and with the LRPC, town officials, and professional planning and design consultants.



Following the Open House session, the LRPC, with assistance from its consultant team (Perkins Eastman, BFJ Planning, Accu-Cost Construction Consultants, Steven Winter Associates, and ForSite) presented an existing inventory and needs assessment for various town buildings, as well as an overview of the preliminary ideas that were displayed and discussed at the Open House session.



Public comments and questions followed the presentation, which generated creative ideas and input that the LRPC will evaluate over the summer months of 2011. The next step is for the LRPC and consultant team to consider options for new, renovated, and upgraded facilities, including parking, and the option of not including some of the facilities.

At this time, the costs that are associated with financing a new building or moving, renovating, or maintaining a facility have not been evaluated. However, as conceptual ideas become actual plan alternatives, these alternatives will be evaluated for cost (in addition to other criteria).

II. OPEN HOUSE SESSION AND PRESENTATION

Open House Session

The public workshop commenced with an Open House Session where participants had the opportunity to see and discuss preliminary facility alternatives amongst one other and with the LRPC, town officials, and professional planning and design consultants.

At the session, participants walked to stations that contained presentation boards for town facilities and sites. The boards included possible facility alternatives for consideration, existing facility program details and requirements, preliminary traffic, parking and pedestrian analyses, preliminary costs per square foot of construction and a preliminary energy audit for Town Hall. Each station was manned by a representative from the project consultant team, who took notes on the comments received from the public.

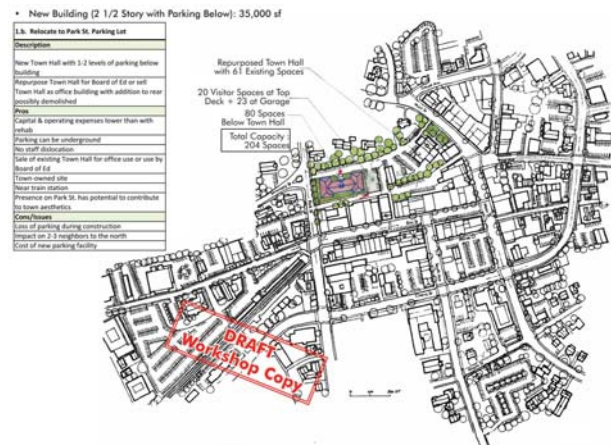
Presentation

Following the Open House Session, Christine Wagner, Chair of the LRPC, and the consultant team (Perkins Eastman, BFJ Planning, ForSite and Steven Winter Associates) gave a presentation that helped inform the public on the work that has been completed to date and the next steps in the planning process. Below is a summary of the presentation:

1) Introduction and Master Plan Goals

Christine Wagner opened the presentation by introducing the study team and the Master Plan goals. After reviewing the project schedule and tasks, Ms. Wagner highlighted the priorities of the project, based on community input received during the first phase of the study. Priorities included the following: 1) Cost; 2) Emphasize provision of high quality services; 3) Preserve town character and ambiance; 4) Integrate sustainability and conduct an energy audit; and 5) Minimize impacts (e.g. traffic and parking inconvenience).

Task	Description	Month									
		May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.		
Task 2.1	Program Requirements										
Task 2.2	Plan Alternatives & Evaluation Matrix										
Task 2.3	Public Workshop			6/27							
Task 2.4	Impact Analysis										
Task 2.5	Alternatives Evaluation/Matrix										
Task 2.6	Recommendations & Draft Plan										
Task 2.7	Public Presentation (Design Charrette)										
Task 2.8	Final Plan										
Task 2.9	Executive Summary										
Long Range Planning Committee Meetings		5/5	5/24	6/15	7/13						



Ms. Wagner concluded by describing the public participation process.

2) *Program Requirements*

Herve Hamon of Perkins Eastman Architects presented the program requirements for the various town-owned buildings and facilities, including the Library (a private organization). Existing conditions, space needs and issues were provided for Town Hall, Fire Department, School Administrative Offices, Police Department, Teen Center, New Canaan Playhouse (i.e. movie theater), Vine Cottage, Highway Department, and Waveny Park. Nestor Bottino of ForSite, a recognized expert in library planning, assisted Mr. Hamon with a review of space needs for the Library.

Mr. Hamon concluded with a review of urgent needs (by associated costs over a five year period) for various town buildings and facilities, based on the Five Year Capital Facilities Plan prepared by Savin Engineers in February 25, 2010.

3) *Conceptual Alternatives*

Frank Fish of BFJ Planning was the next presenter. Mr. Fish covered the preliminary conceptual alternatives that were shown during the Open House Session, including potential options for Town Hall, the Library and Fire Department. The pros and cons/issues with each conceptual alternative were identified.

In addition, Mr. Fish discussed other downtown facilities that could potentially remain in place (based on the consultants' preliminary analysis), such as the Teen Center and Playhouse, which was strongly supported by a recent a market study as an essential component to downtown life. Vine Cottage was also discussed as a building that could remain but with the existing social services that currently occupy the building being regrouped within a renovated or new Town Hall building.

- Existing (2 1/2 Story, on Grade): 28,000 sf --> Renovation
- Proposed Addition (New): 7,000 sf

I.A. Rehab and Expand at Current Location	
Description	Keep front facade and demolish rear portion of building Eliminate surface parking between existing Town Hall and Teen Center Construct 2 1/2 story parking deck between Teen Center & Park St
Pros	Historic facade kept Familiar location on Main St No reliance on other major development decisions
Cons/Issues	Staff in transition in other space for 2 years Cost is probably higher per sf than new Construction Lot size and design constraints Need for new parking deck

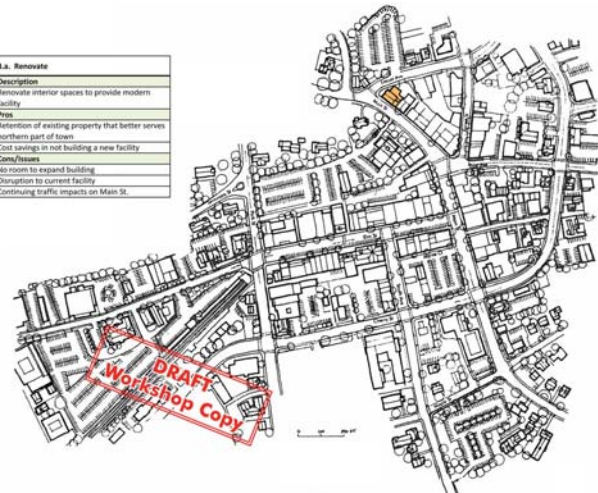


- New Building: 35,000 sf on Grade
- Underground Parking on Other Side of Site

I.A. Relocate to Center School Parking Lot	
Description	New Teen Hall at Center School parking lot Existing Town Hall sold as in "I.B." above
Pros	Large town-owned site with good South Ave. frontage Capital & operating expenses lower than with rehab
Cons/Issues	Most parking in existing Park St. lot continues to serve the merchants & commuters "Gateway" to town Creates strong link center near library
Cons/Issues	Continues library to its current lot Loss of parking during construction



I.A. Renovate	
Description	Renovate exterior spaces to provide modern facility
Pros	Retention of existing property that better serves northern part of town Cost savings in not building a new facility
Cons/Issues	No room to expand building Disruption to current facility Continuing traffic impacts on Main St.



Other facilities outside of downtown, including Waveny and Irwin parks, and Police and Highway departments were covered, as well as a potential parking garage at the Lumberyard lot, located adjacent to the train station.

4) *Preliminary Cost Impacts*

As indicated above, the costs associated with renovating, constructing a new building or demolishing a building are a priority of this study. Using information provided by Accu-Cost, Herve Hamon covered the preliminary costs per square foot for these options for several town facilities, including Town Hall, the Library, Fire Department, School Administrative Offices, and senior housing. In addition, Mr. Hamon presented the costs associated with building both a tiered and underground parking structure, as well as site costs associated with a town green.

DESCRIPTION	COST PER SF
FIRE DEPARTMENT	
NEW CONSTRUCTION (2.5 STORY BUILDING, 30' TO ROOF MID RIDGE, TRADITIONAL STYLE)	350 PER SF
RENOVATION / ADDITION WHILE STILL OCCUPIED	150 PER SF
BOARD OF ED (SCHOOL ADMIN.)	
COST OF OFFICE RENOVATION WITHIN AN EXISTING ENVELOPE (ASSUMPTION: EXTERIOR WOULD NOT CHANGE, ALL INTERIOR GUTTED)	100 PER SF
SENIOR HOUSING	
NEW CONSTRUCTION, MID RANGE COST, NEW ENGLAND CHARACTER (2.5 STORY BUILDING, 30' TO ROOF MID RIDGE, TRADITIONAL STYLE)	325 PER SF
SITE	
LANDSCAPING, SIDEWALKS, CURBS, UNDERGROUND UTILITIES	18 PER SF

5) *Energy Audit*

Lauren Brust of Steven Winter Associates presented her firm’s preliminary findings on an energy audit for Town Hall. Ms. Brust discussed what an energy audit entails, such as benchmarking, analyzing cost effective energy efficiency upgrades, and reporting on what upgrades cost and their paybacks. Next, Ms. Brust covered the electric, mechanical and HVAC systems in Town Hall, their current condition and anticipated remaining life-cycle. Ms. Brust concluded with future energy conservation measures that the Town should explore, such as upgrading incandescent light fixtures to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and replacing the aging boiler.

ECM #	Description	net est. ECM cost with incentives, \$	kWh, 1st yr savings	gallons, 1st yr savings	kBtu/sq ft, 1st yr savings	total 1st yr savings, \$	life of measure, yrs	simple payback, yrs	net present value, \$	CO ₂ reduced, lbs/yr
1	Upgrade (51) incandescent fixtures to CFLs	539	5,136	0	0.6	1,189	5	0.5	4,873	9,196
2	Upgrade Lighting with Occupancy Sensors	4,600	13,181	0	1.6	2,478	15	1.9	24,559	23,601
3	Upgrade Exterior Lighting with Pulse Start Metal Halide Lamps	2,325	2,621	0	0.3	493	15	4.7	3,473	4,693
4	Replace AHU motor	1,692	7,959	0	1.0	1,496	20	1.1	20,163	14,251
5	Replace existing boiler	62,500	-	1280	6.3	4,077	30	15.3	15,380	19,471
6	Replace chiller	28,800	19,200	0	2.3	4,010	25	7.2	39,489	34,378
7	Replace Packaged Unit serving the Probate court	2,590	864	0	0.1	162	15	15.9	-679	1,547
TOTALS		103,046	48,961	1,280	12	13,904	125	47	107,259	107,136

6) *Traffic, Parking and Pedestrians*

The last speaker was Georges Jacquemart of BFJ Planning, who covered traffic, parking and pedestrians as three criteria that will be further analyzed for determining the location and potential



impacts of the facility options. To assist in our analysis of future traffic impacts, BFJ conducted traffic counts at various downtown intersections during the AM (7 to 8) and PM (4 to 6) peak hours. Downtown parking locations, capacity, restrictions, and types of users (e.g. business patrons, employees, and commuters) were also covered, as well as a Pedestrian Circulation Map that was prepared by Keith E. Simpson Associates in 2010.



III. OPEN HOUSE NOTES AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Development of the plan is an open process and participation by the community is essential to help guide the priorities and maintain the town's sense of community and history. Not only will the plan detail what projects the town deems essential to undertake, but what it chooses not to do.

Open House Notes

During the Open House session, participants submitted constructive comments on the preliminary ideas that were shown at each of the six stations. Below is a summary of their notes, ideas and considerations, separated by station:

1. Town Hall

- Consider Lumberyard lot for Town Hall
- Spread services and renovate existing Town Hall, while minimizing parking
- Tiered parking is too expensive
- Need better use of basement space
- Seize opportunity to showcase Town Hall architecturally (e.g. Columbus, Indiana and Brasilia)
- Leave existing open space between front of Town Hall and Main Street

2. Library

- Keep the front lawn and façade of existing historic portion of library
- Consider possible land swap with Town Hall at library site and library moved elsewhere
- Library as a cultural center for town
- Focus on expansion of existing building
- Relocation issue: future use/character of existing site
- Keep clerestory (high) windows for natural light, as well as small landscaped patio with bench on Center St. side
- Consider other architectural styles besides "traditional" architecture

3. Fire Department

- Parking deck at Locust Avenue lot with Police and Fire departments relocated to that lot (with overlapping functions)
- In conjunction with the above, renovate existing Police Department building for affordable and senior housing (or housing for developmentally challenged adults) with congregate dining

4. Other Facilities

- Make Waveny Park ADA compliant and address problem of slippery floors

5. Traffic, Parking and Pedestrians

- Need to examine traffic counts to determine the feasibility or possible necessity of closing Maple Street
- Add walkway along roadway behind Town Hall
- Exclusive pedestrian phases at intersections

- Lease spaces behind People’s Bank and open gate for cross access to Town Hall lot
- Move Town Hall employees to Locust Avenue lot and create sufficient parking to support Main Street retail
- Look at maintaining/enhancing landscaping in parking lots
- Consider an attractive and safe two-level parking deck at Morse Court lot for shoppers

6. Preliminary Cost Impacts and Energy Audit

- Add note to cost impacts that preliminary figures are “approximate”

Public Comments

Following the PowerPoint presentation, workshop participants were offered the opportunity to ask questions and provide their comments on the Master Plan process and conceptual alternatives in front of the collective audience. A summary of each speaker’s comments is as follows:

1. Dick Bergmann

- Spoke of preserving old buildings and historic character of the town
- Historic character cannot be recreated (doing less = more benefits)
- Tearing down older buildings is not green (takes a lot of energy)
- Surprised that many town buildings don’t need more space
- Concern about development interests ruining downtown
- A parking garage could be too expensive and people don’t want to pay a lot of money
- Consider parking management first, before building a new parking garage

2. Robin Beckett

- Concern about costs associated with new construction
- Cost should be #1 priority
- Should be careful not to eliminate symbols of the town; there is value in town character
- Need to examine available programs that incentive the renovation of historic buildings (look at new State program, as well as State Historic Preservation Office)

3. Rebecca Stedman

- Current size and scale of town buildings meets town character
- Any new building or expansion should also be appropriately scaled and designed
- Carefully examine the program requirements of the library, as more people now use e-books
- How would the Irwin Park building be used if the Planning Department moves?

4. Roy Abromowitz

- Cost is the #1 priority and should be the driver for determining which alternatives should be considered
- Cost overruns are imminent

- Proposed library footprint is too large as many books are now digital; should be smaller
- In addition to the cost of a new library building, operational costs would also increase and the burden passed onto the town
- Amortization (e.g. 30 year bond at 5%) indicates that new buildings costs are too expensive for the town
- Need a prioritized capital plan
- Bond issue and effect on mill rate
- New Canaan is not going to grow; therefore, program requirements should reflect this
- Christine Wagner, LRPC: Library is looking to raise their own capital for a new building

5. Dan Radman

- Concern about the long time-frame of the planning process and alleged duplication of services (i.e. past studies have already been done)
- Offices are downsizing as less space is needed for employees due to technology
- It is more efficient to renovate and expand existing buildings, such as town hall
- Renovating and expanding Town Hall should be the only option in the study; must keep existing Town Hall building
- Proposed library is too big (see Darien library as an example)
- How would the library lot be used if the library moves to another property?
- The space needs for the Board of Education cafeteria is too big (program requirement is 25 people)
- Third floor of Police Department is underutilized and should accommodate another use or purpose
- Tiered parking at Town Hall site (and Park St. lot) would destroy town character
- Locust Ave. lot should be considered for tiered parking and town employees should park there
- Irwin Park building was never meant to house Planning Department or other town departments; this was only a temporary solution; take off the table for use by any town departments

6. Dave Scannell

- Question about how the library would raise money for a new building; need to address this in the study

7. Ms. Jones

- Keep Town Hall where it is and renovate it; Town Hall is part of historic fabric of New Canaan

8. Jane Himmell

- Town cannot decide what the cost should be until it figures out what the needs and priorities are
- Disagrees with Mr. Abramowitz that cost should be determining factor in deciding which are the best alternatives
- Appreciates the current planning process, which analyzes existing conditions, space needs, and different alternatives, while weighing pros and cons

- Need to know program requirements; how we use space is important
- Is there a way to keep historic building façades? Perhaps we can look at façade restrictions on a future renovation of Town Hall
- We need a town green
- Explore parking alternatives
- Observation made that the current Town Hall location is not the center of town
- We need to look at the library space that is now inflexible and we need a community space

9. Keith Simpson

- Consultant team should reduce their scope of work and narrow priorities now that they have heard from the public so we can move faster
- Need to maintain character of existing buildings; not just about “value engineering”
- Observation made the older portion of the library is nice but the newer additions are not
- Streetscape is important (e.g. Forest St. transformation as a restaurant row and more walkable)
- Need to balance need for more parking with more space for pedestrians
- Wants to make town more pedestrian friendly and this needs space to do more
- Suggestions: 1) Eliminate two spaces in front of Ralph Lauren on Elm St. and bumpout sidewalk; 2) Bumpout sidewalk in front of Movie Theater

10. Sasha Lauer

- Concern with parking garage safety; opined that many women will not use garages
- Pleasantville is an example of a place that built a parking garage that is now used by drug dealers
- Does not want parking garages in town, especially not adjacent to Teen Center; however, parking garage is okay at Lumberyard lot
- Because of technology (e.g. digital files) there is not a need for a lot of office space
- Don't increase the size of Town Hall; instead, utilize what is currently there by making it more efficient
- Christine Wagner, LRPC: Consultant team will analyze parking garage safety statistics and incorporate into study; a goal of the study is no net loss in parking

11. Tanya Bickley

- There is value in Town Hall in its character, as well as value in historic buildings
- Parking counts are needed at the following locations: Cherry St./South St., Main St./Cherry St., and God's Acre/Main St., and more traffic counts are needed for mid-day
- Should examine the function of exterior green space, which is needed at public facilities
- There is inequity in allowing Library to have a free land swap with town for Center School lot
- Should examine renewable energy for buildings, such as solar panels on top of Town Hall (could rent out solar panels)

- Need strict energy audits for all town buildings
- Senior housing should be considered at Lumberyard lot and “Parcel D”
- Concern with project schedule and having a second public workshop after conclusions have been made

12. Rogers Harper

- Wait for Library to present their ideas before passing judgement on what their space needs are
- Library should make a presentation to the public about their needs and intentions

