

# City of Newton – NewCAL Project Update

January 25, 2022

The Newton Center for Active Living, NewCAL, project will be hosting our next community meeting on Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. You can register for the meeting in advance by clicking [here](#).

We've been hard at work incorporating the feedback we received, and we're excited to share with you the below renderings of a few draft conceptual design options for consideration and refinement. These will be part of our next presentation, and we'll also be showcasing how we have incorporated the stained-glass windows and other historic elements from the existing building, as well as efforts to include design details that pay homage to the existing building.



*Option 1 With Gable End*



*Option 2 With No Gable End*

Hundreds of residents, appointed and elected officials, and stakeholders were involved in the decision whether to preserve the existing building with an addition or to build a new facility. The near unanimous decision was to design and construct a handsome

building that fits well in Newtonville and is designed exactly to meet the needs of the users for the next 100 years: age-friendly, accessible, laid out well, barrier-free, with a façade that embraces our older adults, and welcomes and attracts new users.

The primary reasons given by the Council on Aging and the Design Review Committee when they voted unanimously to support new construction, and the reasons given by the overwhelming majority of the Public Facilities and Programs and Services Committees of the City Council, the Commission on Disability, and community members who have attended our meetings over the past few years as to why they supported new construction:

- The main floor of the existing building is six feet above grade; since it wasn't constructed to be all age friendly and accessible, it would require ramps, stairs, and lifts at the entrance to the facility.
- Because of the siting of the existing building, the addition extends much further in the rear of the site. This brings the building closer to the direct abutters. This also means we can't have a separate vehicular entrance and exit, requiring multi-point turns when leaving the parking lot, which is a real negative for users.
- The renovation/addition is estimated to cost \$5M-\$6M more than the new construction option.
- The renovation/addition would mean a longer construction schedule, displacing senior programming for a longer period.
- The renovation/addition option requires a larger building site footprint, limiting green space, onsite parking, and other site amenities.
- The modifications to the existing building that would have been required to make it age-friendly, welcoming, accessible, and barrier-free, would have so significantly modified the existing façade that the potential end product was not something that people felt would be attractive or appropriate.

Some people have expressed an interest in stopping the current plans for a new building, going back to the beginning of the design process, and preserving the existing building in whole or in part.

We ask that you reach out to the City Council and Newton Historic Commission by emailing them at [citycouncil@newtonma.gov](mailto:citycouncil@newtonma.gov) and [vbirmingham@newtonma.gov](mailto:vbirmingham@newtonma.gov) to let them know if you support the NewCAL project moving forward with the new building, or if you would prefer to see us stop the current plans and go back and preserve the existing building in whole or in part.

Regards,

Josh Morse  
Public Buildings Commissioner  
Public Buildings Department  
City of Newton