

Newtown Community Center

Fairfield Hills Authority Campus
Newtown, CT

Master Plan Selection Narrative

Date: January 11, 2017

In support of the Master planning phase of the project this office has reviewed the spaces adjacent to the NYA and Town Hall and evaluated several options for development of a new community center. Ultimately three locations seemed make the most sense while maintaining the character and layout of the overall campus and meeting the intended goals of the new center and its interior and exterior components.

Option A – The location of the old Litchfield House, adjacent to NYA, which was also under consideration during the prior design effort.

Option B – A site location west of Option A and above the old Yale Laboratory.

Option C – A location on the original site of the Caanan house which was recently demolished and directly across Simpson Street from the Municipal Center.

We have evaluated all three of these locations and have test-fit a concept plan at each, based on the current working building program (inclusive of interior and exterior elements), and can demonstrate how each location is capable of supporting the proposed center. However, each of the three locations do offer some advantages and disadvantages over each other.

Concept Plans

The concept plans have a footprint (single level) of appx. 27,000 gross square feet (inclusive of a natatorium and community spaces) and allow for a future 6,500 s.f. addition (25%). Each site option has a different concept plan due to the variations specific to each site (e.g. access to Simpson Street and existing parking, availability of new parking locations, service access, adjacency to other buildings and existing site features and characteristics, etc.)

All options were developed to allow this facility to serve as a "trail-head" allowing a place to start and/or finish a hike along the trails, or any other recreational use of the FHA campus. All plans are predicated on the idea that the building offers flexible, shared community spaces for gatherings and/or classes of varied sizes and ages and will house a recreational pool with appropriate support facilities.

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Option A

This option's adjacency to NYA allows for interaction with that facility. Although not a Town facility and no longer being considered for a hard-connection to the proposed center, the NYA does offer companion programs to those that might be offered at the proposed center. Adjacency may allow for family members to utilize both facilities simultaneously, assuming separate membership requirements to both are met. Utilizing this site also allows the land to the west, between the new facility and Plymouth House to be developed. Potential uses could include commercial development, parking, active and/or passive recreation, festival space, etc.

Option A poses some challenges, however. It is likely that foundations and slabs for Litchfield House were never fully removed and numerous utility lines and the old tunnel system are thought to surround and permeate this location. Although the site was recently flagged and found clear of wetlands, visual evidence indicates the water-table is high, which may pose a problem with foundations, especially when the distributed weight of a pool facility is taken into consideration.

This location, although it may benefit from its adjacency to NYA, is also limited in terms of buildable area. We would recommend siting the building so that future expansion could be developed towards NYA, while leaving enough space to maintain a shared service access. This location does locate portions of the building within the wetlands buffer area and will require a wetlands approval to assure that the project poses no risk to the wetlands located Southeast.

Available locations for new parking and drop-off areas are also limited, as any development west of the building would impede on outdoor recreational features and require either distant-access to parking, or crossing traffic to access these features.

Option B

This location puts principal construction further from the wetlands and completely out of the buffer. Locations for future expansion can be accommodated either to the South (within the buffer) or East. This location also allows development on the East and West, which opens up options for vehicular access and parking as well as access to exterior site amenities while minimizing distances and crossing traffic to some of the amenities.

This location also aligns with an axis created by the existing green to the North and could help to support festivals and programs that may utilize that space. Alternatively, or additionally, secondary festival space can be developed to the East.

Option B is located above the Yale Laboratory foundation, and utilities and tunnels are likely to still be present. This location will require investigation and possible relocation of an existing storm sewer that serves a drainage cistern located in the wetlands. Finally, this location splits

up what could be a very nicely laid out greenspace into three smaller spaces. While this allows for multiple uses of those spaces simultaneously, it also limits flexibility as a larger event may require use of two or three of the available areas and might seem disjointed.

Option C

The location above the old Cannan House fits within the primary Axis of the FHA campus which runs through the Municipal Center from Kent House. While the campus' future development is not beholden to these axes, the campus is well defined by them and developing project with them in mind supports the original mission of the FHA. Siting the building in this location allows a lot of flexibility as it is furthest from the wetlands and offers a better opportunity for favorable soil/bearing conditions. Likewise, the available information on existing utilities shows that the existing building had all of its utility entrances consolidated to a single location, which could reduce overall impact of relocating or abandoning those lines.

This location allows for a connected greenspace that can be subdivided for multiple programs or combined for larger events and can be situated to allow parking adjacent to the building as well as all proposed exterior amenities. Finally, future expansion can exist in multiple locations.

This location is adjacent to an uphill grade to the South, and likely still has portions of the Caanan House foundations below.

Next Steps

We would recommend the Board of Selectmen approve a site option for further development. Once selected, a site would need to have geotechnical testing completed to determine what the soil capacities are, which would ultimately help determine the type of (and cost for) the building's structural foundations.

In addition, we would start the Schematic Design phase of project development which will allow us to investigate varied options for building layout and start to develop cost models with the Town's construction manager (Caldwell and Walsh). At this point, we would also be able to start formal discussions with the Town's Planning department and FHA to understand the specific requirements that would impact a project on any give location.

We are prepared present these options in greater detail and provide a comprehensive analysis of each at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting scheduled for 1/17 @ 7:30 pm.



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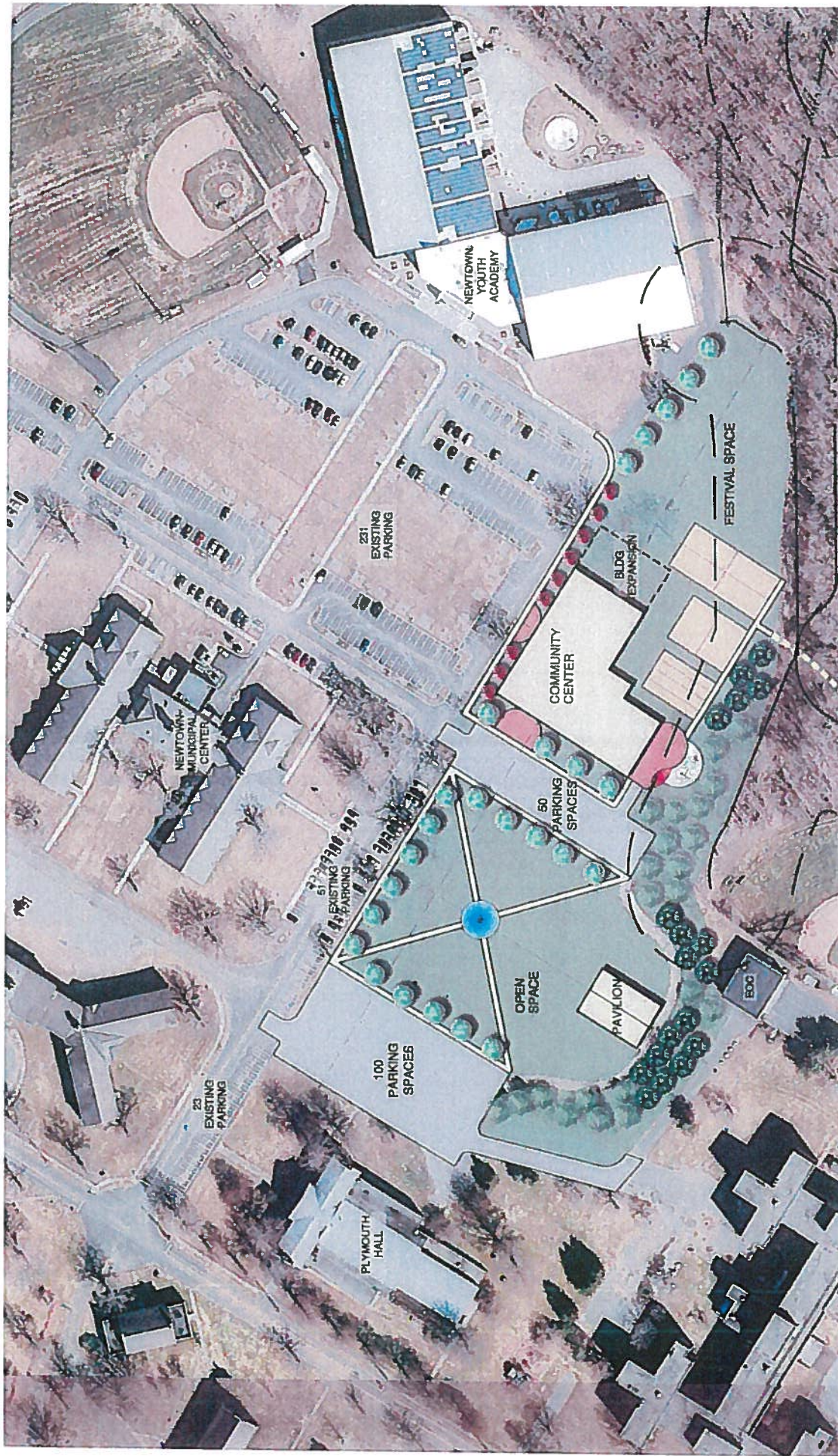
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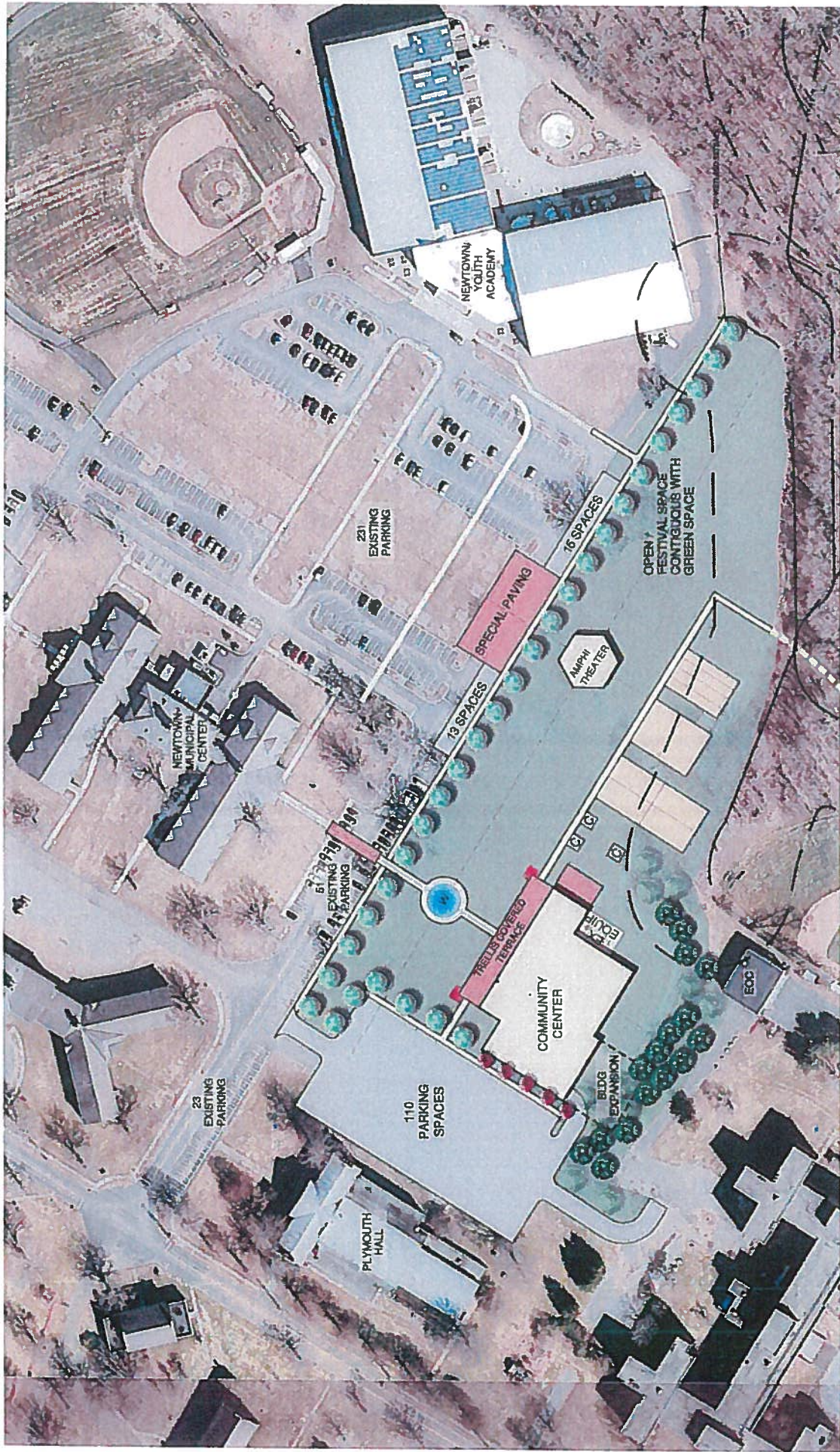




Master Plan | Option B

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Master Plan | Option C

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DESIGN

