

Newton Early Childhood Program (NECP)

Project Update

September 12, 2019

The Newton Early Childhood Program project received site plan approval in July. Since then we have been working with the project team and NPS staff to complete the schematic design phase, cost estimating, and budget reconciliation. The exterior refinements have not resulted in any material changes to the site plan, but rather developed the approved plan to a level that could allow for the transition to the design development phase. The interior design has evolved but the general layout remains the same. We still have 17 classrooms, and all the support spaces that were identified as programmatically necessary during the feasibility phase.

We have made slight modifications the 2nd floor classroom layouts in that the small breakout areas have been move from the corridor side to the center of the classroom, and instead of the full height walls, we are exploring options to create these spaces with partial walls or through furniture design and layout. We are also exploring some modifications to the hallway leading to the small group rooms, and moveable partitions in the small group rooms as opposed to full height walls. These items are being pursued for both cost savings, and to allow for future flexibility of the spaces as the program evolves over time.

On the middle floor we are exploring the possibility of flipping the nurse's suite from east side to the west side. This could create enough space to also allow a couple office spaces to come up from the lower level, while also reducing the amount of interior demolition and construction. We are exploring the potential reconfiguration of a pair of restrooms on the north end of this floor.

On the lower level we are exploring several possible scenarios to try and optimize the efficient use of the space, disturb as little currently unfinished space as possible, while also maximizing the use of the spaces that have robust natural light and optimal ceiling heights. We are looking to shift the office suits west toward Albemarle to take advantage of the new natural light, bring more of the office spaces out of the currently unfinished areas, while also saving money by not having to finish these spaces. The primary goal is to place the occupied areas in the best possible spaces within this floor, while minimizing the expensive undertaking of finishing currently unfinished areas where natural light and building systems would need to be brought in.

In addition to all the above, the Public Buildings Department worked with the project team to find creative solutions to deliver the same design in a variety of more cost-effective ways. Based on the hard work of the working group and project team, the project is currently on track to fit within the current budget.

On 9/11/19, a project update was provided to the Design Review Committee. We discussed the conditions that were applied to the site plan approval letter from the DRC.

All those conditions continue to be met. Of note, the desire to continue to analyze the building envelope insulation possibilities is still ongoing but wrapping the building with insulation and a cladding system is currently not included in the project or project budget. This item is still proving to be in excess of \$1M, and the payback continues to be well beyond the life of the system and the building. We are still on track to install a VRF system, and the building will not consume fossil fuel on site aside from the possibility of an emergency generator. We also reviewed all of the above interior design refinements and confirmed the general building system approach.

The project schedule has shift outward slightly. We are still pushing to complete construction documents this winter, with construction starting shortly thereafter, but the completion and move-in date has shifted from the winter of 2021, to somewhere between the spring/summer of 2021. As a reminder, the move-in schedule demands for NECP is different than our elementary schools, as the program runs year-round so aligning with a holiday break or the summer is not critical. This will not impact the construction start of Lincoln-Eliot, as that is still scheduled to start in the Fall of 2021.

We will be docketing a request with the City Council shortly to split the previously authorized design funds to separate the NECP and Lincoln-Eliot projects, as well as to notify the Council of our intent to move into design development. There will be no ask for additional funds included in this request. This will also be an opportunity to update the Council on the project status.