



## Newton - Lincoln Eliot School – Design Review Committee Meeting

*Design Review Committee meeting with others in attendance*

**Meeting: December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (6:02 PM-7:45PM)**

**Location: Digital, via Zoom**

### Attendees

---

**City of Newton:** Alejandro Valcarce Joshua Morse\*

**Design Review Committee:** Ellen Light\* John Mulligan\* Thomas Gloria\*  
Maria Leo\* SingNing Kuo\* Amy Mackrell\*  
David Gillespie\* Emily Prenner Steve Siegel

**School Building Committee:** Liam Hurley\*

**Arrowstreet Architects:** Tina Soo Hoo Larry Spang

**Hill International:** Mary Mahoney

\* Denotes Voting Members

---

Joshua Morse recapped the School Building Committee meeting on 12/14/21, noting that there was a strong preference for locating the entrance on the left side of the plans.

### Lincoln Eliot

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet presented the existing conditions of the building, noting a 19ft elevation change from Jackson Rd. to the first floor of the classroom bar.

Ms. Soo Hoo then presented slides reviewing the following topics ([Link to PDF](#)):

- Lincoln Eliot School District & Student Distribution
  - Joshua Morse confirmed that the greyed-out areas are a buffer zone
- Initial Traffic Impact Study
- New Design Options
- Site Circulation Comparisons
- Site Plans
- Building Massing Diagrams

Joshua Morse provided feedback from the School Building Committee suggesting to move away from all versions of Option 3.

Ellen Light noted that the blue zones are the primary problem with some of the designs. Ms. Light also shared concerns with regards to the lobby size, the number of entrances, and how to secure the numerous entrances into the building.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet stated that the Lincoln Eliot Working Group and Principal Danielle Morrissey shared their programmatic considerations with regards to entry, noting that all entries to the building have been in use during Covid. Ms. Soo Hoo also stated that Principal Morrissey believes that moving forward, having students come through a more controlled main entrance would be desirable, noting that in inclement weather all entrances would be used.

Ellen Light suggested that people may have concerns over having a single main entry that is controlled.

Joshua Morse expressed the School Building Committees desires to further study separating the bus and van loops, though considerations and trade-offs must be made.

Emily Prenner noted that students enter the building and route to the classrooms without their parents. If there is an adult that wants to access the building, they must go through the main entry and get buzzed in by the main office.

David Gillespie shared concerns over designated blue zones, on both sides of Jackson Rd., limiting the width of the road and causing traffic. Mr. Gillespie also noted that the City is moving away from angled street parking and thinks that blue zones on both sides of the road, along with angled street parking will create a traffic issue.

Steven Siegel questioned if traffic from the north and drop-off points on Waban St. and Pearl St. had been explored with regards to student pedestrian pathing crossing traffic.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted wanting to avoid designating a blue zone on Waban St. to minimize the amount of traffic crossing through Waban St. Ms. Soo Hoo noted the two current existing blue zones for the old Lincoln Eliot and would like to avoid designating a second blue zone on Pearl St.

Joshua Morse noted that work needs to be completed with Newton Public Schools and "Safe Routes to Schools" to locate and mark opportunities for drop-and-walk, or drop-and-go, that are farther from the site.

Steven Siegel questioned if any other schools have blue zones located on both sides of the road.

Joshua Morse noted that Lincoln Eliot is the most walked school, and most pedestrian traffic will be arriving from the north-west and west. Mr. Morse also noted that the blue zones depicted are more than what currently exists at Lincoln Eliot, and if other drop-and-go areas can be designated the blue zones can be pulled back.

David Gillespie stressed that he is not in support of the angled parking spaces on Jackson Rd. Mr. Gillespie also suggested to explore the distances from the blue zone to the lobby, versus from the blue zone to the entrance of the lot.

Larry Spang of Arrowstreet expressed a concern with parents stacking up at the tail end of the blue zone if the head of the blue zone is located away from the entrance.

Alejandro Valcarce noted a problem with Option 1v2 where vehicles exiting the parking lot will have to intersect people queuing up for the blue zone and suggested the possibility of widening the right-of-way on Jackson Rd. to accommodate blue zones.

Maria Leo noted that the School Committee highly discourages on-site parent loops for parents to U-turn. Joshua Morse agreed noting that studies done on on-site parent loops have shown them to be problematic.

Maria Leo noted the existence of parking on both sides of Jackson Rd. must be taken into consideration.

Amy MacKrell noted her preference for Option 1.B which locates the new lobby and main entry close to Jackson Rd. as well as co-locating the Gym, Lobby, and Auditorium. Ms. MacKrell also noted that the contiguous greenspace is a desirable aspect of the design.

Joshua Morse expressed the challenges of Option 1.B where the administration offices are located a long distance from the classroom bar. Mr. Morse also noted that the blue zones in Option 1.B would not work and would cause students to walk across traffic lanes.

Emily Prenner stressed accessibility concerns in Option 1.B, with regards to the numerous half-level floors due to site grading, citing the need for numerous elevators on the interior for students to traverse the various half-levels.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted the desire to shorten the distance from the bus/van loop to an entrance.

SingNing Kuo shared her preference for locating the main entrance closer to Jackson Rd. stating that students will either need to navigate the grade change outside or inside regardless and believes that having students go up stairs or ramps inside the building, especially in the winter, is a better option.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that there are still elevation changes, even in Option 1.B, from Jackson Rd. to the main entry.

SingNing Kuo suggested the possibility of combining the parking lot and blue zone layout of Option 1v3 with the site plan of Option 1B.

Liam Hurley noted the desire to prioritize walking, biking, taking the bus or vans whenever possible. Mr. Hurley suggested that blue zones should be located where the rules would be easy to follow.

Larry Spang of Arrowstreet reviewed versions of Option 2 that moved the van loop on to Waban St./Walnut Park, expressing that the group thought preserving green space and locating the van loop off the curb on Walnut Park was a better option. Mr. Spang noted that a second entrance on Waban St./Walnut Park necessitates a two-level lobby.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that the grading of Waban St. is not ideal for Vans to park, and students to unload on.

Joshua Morse noted that in all potential Options, the bus and van loop is closer to the entrance than the Angiers, Zervas, and Cabot schools, however, the blue zones are located farther.

Thomas Gloria asked about the history of 111 Jackson Rd.

Discussion Ensued over the urban wooded area alongside the west side of Jackson Road.

John Mulligan noted the existence of a pond within the urban forest area.

Steven Siegel asked if there was any impact in locating the staff parking lot adjacent to the urban forest.

Joshua Morse stated there is no intention of touching the urban forest are aside from potentially cleaning it up and noted there were no issues with the staff parking lot and doesn't foresee any impacts.

David Gillespie asked if new construction had been a consideration.

Joshua Morse noted that new construction options were explored and ultimately decided against it as new construction poses similar if not more challenges compared to an Add/Reno.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet noted that curbs would be pushed back onto the property to accommodate blue zones.

Thomas Gloria noted that widening the road at Zervas School to accommodate blue zones was explored, however it was discovered that it would encourage speeding and received community pushback. Ultimately, the road was not widened, and the blue zone was not pulled of the street onto school property.

Ms. Soo Hoo noted the desire to conduct further studies with MDM Transportation Consultants to determine traffic impacts and viable strategies for mitigating concerns.

Tina Soo Hoo of Arrowstreet reviewed the preliminary building massing schemes of Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3 variants in comparison to the pre-existing building and site.

SingNing Kuo noted that Option 3 provides an opportunity for locating the playground in the existing Chapel and Convent space.

Larry Spang shared the strategy for creating a flat play space in front of the building and taking a slope down to the lower field area and stated that Arrowstreet is trying to avoid the use of retaining walls. Mr. Spang also noted that the New Gymnasium Scheme places the Gymnasium 8-10ft lower than the grading on Waban St. lessening the visual presence on Waban St.

Joshua Morse provided an outlook into future scheduling stating that Lincoln Eliot needs to be completed so that the Old Lincoln Eliot can be used as swing space for the Countryside school which is already in the MSBA process. 687 Watertown St. is rapidly approaching completion which will allow students to get out of 150 Jackson Rd. so the Lincoln Eliot project can be started.

Mr. Morse noted that the goal is to work towards voting on a preferred option by January 11<sup>th</sup> with the School Building Committee. Preferred option is a general building configuration, and overall high-level site plan.

Mr. Morse stated that January through late spring/early summer will be focused on working through the site plan process to nail down the site plan, bus loops, blue zones, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, early landscape plans, site lighting, and site security; goal is not to nail down transportation strategy, and safe routes to schools.

Mr. Morse also noted that the goal is to seek site plan approval of the city council in early July, to keep on track for breaking ground in late summer 2023, and move students in in the fall of 2025

Ellen Light asked if work will be completed on interior floor plans alongside site plan design.

Josh Morse stated that the design team will be progressing on the interior of the building while site plan work is progressing.

Ellen Light suggested combining some Design Review Committee meetings with School Building Committee Meetings noting that it is a lot of meetings for Arrowstreet and the Committees.

Design Review Committee and School Building Committee meetings were discussed.

Joshua Morse added that at some point there will be a separation between the School Building and Design Review Committees.

Ellen Light suggested compiling a 3-month lookahead schedule for committee meetings. Joshua Morse noted that a draft schedule is has been completed which covers now until July. Alejandro Valcarce stated that Hill International is assembling a comprehensive schedule consisting of all committees and commissions which can be reviewed to combine and eliminate select meetings.

Mr. Valcarce stated he is looking to have DRC site plan approval in late May, to complete 5-58 in June, and seek City Council approval in the July meeting prior to the summer recess.

David Gillespie noted that he is in support of Ellen Lights suggestion to combine and/or minimize the number of meetings.

Alejandro Valcarce stated he will be sending out the calendar dates for 2022, and the zoom meeting invites, noting that the dates are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday after the first Monday of the month.

Larry Spang of Arrowstreet asked if the group had plans of moving towards in-person meetings. Alejandro Valcarce noted that in-person meetings can be scheduled and agreed upon by the group case-by-case if needed.

Steven Siegel stated he does agree that for some meetings, in-person meetings make a lot of sense, however he feels he can be more engaged in a remote meeting where he can use his technology to access documents or reference materials.

SingNing Kuo noted that a physical 3D model would be useful to understand the topology and elevation of the buildings.

Joshua Morse stated that remote meetings will be essential over the next 5 years due to the number of projects in the City of Newton.

**The Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM**

Details of this meeting can be found on the project website at <http://lincolneliot-necp-projects.com/>.  
Password: QOMT#Hk\$

***These notes will become part of the project record as written***

To the best of my knowledge, these notes are a fair representation of the items discussed at the meeting.  
Additional items or corrections should be brought to the attention of the writer.  
Submitted by: Mark Krikorian 3/1/22