

**Perkins Eastman**  
**Tobin Montessori & Vassal Lane Upper Schools**  
**Community Meeting 04/30/19**  
**Community Feedback Summary Responses**

- **Construction and Neighborhood Issues:**
  - Communication process for abutters and those in area to have timely information & sufficient input throughout the project to ensure optimized decisions made for all stakeholders. All information will be presented to the public at the major design intervals via community meetings. This information shall also be posted on the City construction update webpage. During construction, weekly updates of construction activities shall be posted on the website and to those who have provided the City with an email address.
  - Neighborhood skepticism re. process – neighborhood has had a lot of construction e.g. Sewer Separation project: noise, dirt, & traffic during construction need to be managed The City's Owner Project Management (OPM) Staff will be onsite daily to monitor and enforce all applicable City ordinances.
  - Documenting Existing Conditions neighbor's property prior to construction: what is the process and when will this be finalized? The City will be working with CDM/Smith, the geotechnical engineer and the construction manager to document existing conditions within a zone determined by CDM/Smith. The City will send out notifications and request written permission from each owner in order for the contractor's professional photographer to access your home and take inside and outside photographs of each space within your home. Vibration monitoring shall be placed strategically around the site for monitoring purposes.
  - Plans during and after construction that minimizes impact to neighbors, traffic etc. The City will be working with the construction manager to develop a traffic management plan that shall be updated weekly depending on site activities
  - Contractor Hours – compliance Noise Ordinance or will waivers be required? (How many waivers were requested at Putnam Ave. & Cambridge St?) The construction manager shall comply with the City Ordinances. No waivers were requested on MLK or KOCSUS projects.
  - Demo Method / effect on Neighbors? The City will be working with the construction manager to develop a dust mitigation plan to minimize any affects to the neighbors. Demolition method will be determined when we know the design option selected.
  - Construction site should post contact info for onsite manager available 24/7 The City's website will have all contact information including a 24/7 contact number.
  - Can Armory be used for Contractor parking to min. parking in neighborhood? The construction manager shall be requested to comply with City parking regulations and work on a parking mitigation plan to protect the surrounding neighborhood from workers vehicles parking on the streets.

- **Design and School Programming: General response to all below:** The City and the Design team understand your issues and shall strive answer your questions and comments when presenting updates at Future Community Meetings.
  - Enrollment – What is the projected enrollment & projected size of building(s)?
  - How to Accommodate Add +/- 300-400 Students – could younger children go to another site?
  - Wish List Here vs. Opportunities Other Schools
  - Need to review pros & cons of all options before selecting Preferred Option: Reno/Addition, New on Ball Field, New on Existing
  - Respectful of Neighborhood/Breakdown Scale of Building
  - Building should blend in - No more Brutalist Ego Trips / Not a Military Bastion
  - Remember Spirit of Existing Building
  - Placing the building in the center of the site could avoid turf battles
  - Try to center building and buffer – campus feel
  - Carbon Sustainability of New vs. Reuse vs. Meeting Functionality
  - Fewer/Monitored Entrances
  - Bring Principles of Montessori Beyond the Classroom
  - Adequate Visual & Performing Arts Space
  - Community Space
  - Safety
  - Special Start part of Community
  - Add Art & Community Space to Design Principles
  - Like Idea Professional Development Community
  
- **Traffic and Parking: General response to all below:** The City and the Design team understand your issues and shall strive answer your questions and comments when presenting updates at future community meetings. The traffic consultant was present at the last community meeting had some initial discussions with those who visited this table.
  - On-site Drop-Off & Pick-Up (see Shady Hill)
  - Parents separate from buses
  - Careful consideration for traffic at drop-off and pick up
  - More drop off needed within site to not clog the streets
  - School Campus feel is piece meal – need a broader approach
  - Vassal Lane presents danger too narrow for buses, sideswipes
  - Cars go wrong-way on Vassal & Alpine @ Fresh Pond Parkway
  - Traffic on Concord backs up , particularly when traffic light on Alpine turns red all the way to Birch: add buses + parents dropping off children & may back up to the rotary
  - People including school staff make illegal lefts from Fresh Pond Parkway onto Vassal Lane
  - Can traffic patterns on streets be changed
  - Envision connecting Fern to Ped X-ing to Fresh Pond
  - Drop off on Concord will be “unsafe” traffic will be grid locked – this is untenable for everyone
  - Challenges specific to Younger Children

- More Middle Schoolers may mean more bikers & walkers from further away; think about safe bike & pedestrian routes to school
  - Consider walkway to driveway
  - Look at new traffic flows: split traffic between Vassal Lane & Concord Ave?
  - Consider safer walking and bicycle routes, dedicated bike lanes - useful to have bike path connecting Danehy thru to FreshPond
  - Polling parents – would dedicated bike lanes limit cars?
  - Park on Armory site during construction to minimize parking in neighborhood?
  - Traffic Study before final Design - see previous Traffic Study 2-3 yrs. ago
  - 526 Units being developed at Wheeler street plus other developments
- **Parks, Playgrounds, Landscaping and Storm Water Management Infrastructure: **General response to all below:** The City and the Design team understand your issues and shall strive answer your questions and comments when presenting updates at future community meetings.**
  - Playgrounds:
    - Playgrounds should be welcoming and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities and number of users
    - Separate play spaces for younger vs. older students
    - Stair movement for OT/PT – can something be incorporated into the playground
    - Use green playground ideas including natural material
    - Landscape is important around playgrounds
  - Sports:
    - Think about other parks in Cambridge and what needs they are meeting and what needs have not been met yet that can be incorporated into this project
    - If turf is used – turf infill should be virgin rubber or alternate infill acceptable. Recycled is not acceptable.
    - Tennis courts needed if possible
    - New baseball fields – turf grass ok, no need for it to be synthetic
    - Danehy park includes a lacrosse field
    - The current ball fields include one Little League Majors Field for 10 to 13 year-old and two Minor fields for 8-10 year olds
    - Plan for relocation of the West Cambridge Little League for duration of the project?
    - Basketball is only shaded court around and is well used
    - Understand open space may not fit a full soccer field but include soccer goal area
    - Danehy Park is building a fully accessible playground
  - Gardening:
    - Include pollinator garden
    - Include butterfly garden
    - Include greenhouse on the roof
    - Include community garden space
    - Is there a way there can be some rooftop use for students
    - Courtyard design useful for school classrooms that aren't too shady

- Building:
  - Design efficient building to preserve more open space
  - Are there opportunities for underground parking
  - Study shade that casts from new building onto the playgrounds
  - Need safe facilities operations
- Landscaping:
  - Protect mature trees (particularly along Vassal and eastern property line) as they are important resource environmentally and visually and are signature elements of the site
  - How will grass be maintained in hot weather
  - Placing building in the center could save trees
- General Site:
  - There should be a clear pedestrian connection from the Fern/Concord intersection through the site to Fresh Pond Parkway pedestrian signalized crossing
  - What steps will be taken to ensure health & safety of existing trees in the construction zone?
  - Need buffer against the Armory
  - Lighting important
  - Envision Alewife plan calls for site design that allows foot & bike traffic to traverse the site from Fern St. over to Fresh Pond Parkway crossing Vassal Lane
  - Also in keeping with Envision Alewife, suggest final design includes lit path across the property (much of existing site dark at night)
- Storm Water Management:
  - There are existing drainage problems along the street to the east and near the tot lot
  - Given school's location in flood plan: City's stated focus on storm water laudible – encourage design team to not only substitute green infrastructure in place of takes & pipes to greatest degree possible, set example how good development can be done in flood-prone areas, but go beyond typical flood-proofing efforts and see site as a neighborhood resilience center capable of weathering the most severe conditions
- **Site Soil Management: General response to all below:** The City and the Design team understand your issues and shall strive answer your questions and comments when presenting updates at Future Community Meetings. Safety of workers and the public are of utmost importance. Each design option may have different methods to remove or stabilize the soils for these safety and geotechnical reasons. Testing results of the subsurface existing conditions can be found on the City website.
  - Large concern: remediation practices
  - Noise & dust control
  - Transparency in the process
  - Concerns severity of site's environmental problems

- Will price tag adequately reflect cost of ensuring public health and safety: what % of construction are anticipated being allocated to these efforts?
- Presentation (which report?) pg. 18, “no VOC’s (were) found in soil or groundwater above MasDEP standards, while the full report from CDM Smith repeatedly cites presence of “strong VOC odors” & lists positive test results for VOC’s – what are the health & safety hazards to students, faculty, staff & abutters & those in the immediate area?
- Support City’s effort to “make right the site’s checkered environment Past”
- **Other Ideas and Concerns:**
  - Need for ongoing Community Input & Engagement throughout the process: concerns about opportunity for community input to select the preferred option. **All information will be presented to the public at the major design intervals via community meetings. This information shall also be posted on the City construction update webpage.**
  - Swing Space: location, quality of space & educational experience **The CPS is developing a solution to meet the needs of the diverse school needs. The CPS will provide that information to the community at an appropriate time.**
  - No lost academic years while in swing space
  - Who makes the decisions in the City – do the neighborhoods really have any input?
  - Community needs input on options before Preferred Option selected,
  - Can City take Armory by Eminent Domain? Need better clear communication about process & meetings. **Initial discussion have been made however there will likely be no future change in use.**
  - Will options to Geothermal wells be explored? **Yes, The City and design team are exploring all design options during the feasibility study.**
  - Does 1% Public Art apply to full project value? **The art budget, 1% of construction costs, will be developed and evaluated as part of the feasibility study. The community will be provided this info when available.**

END OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK NOTES