

# BOE Meeting 1-18-24

# Bus Lot Design Options

**NEW FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT**



# History

- 4-23-2019 During pre-referendum the District selected Option 3 created by QA&M architects which placed the new Consolidated Early Learning Academy building on the existing MHHS site eliminating the existing bus lot.
- 10-5-2019, Referendum. The Town resolution included language “*space for parking for faculty, staff and buses*” but was not specific.
- The RFP’s issued for the OPM, Architect and CM did not request and study or site selection phase for a relocated bus lot – the scope included “*Consolidated Elementary School, site restoration creation of a new bus lot*”
- The approach communicated to the design team was that the bus lot would be located on the existing Consolidated site once the building was demolished.

# Number of Buses and Current Routes

- There are currently 24 school buses and 10 vans utilized by the district
- Currently the district operates 22 in-district routes – 19 buses and 3 vans
- In 2019, the majority of the buses were replaced with clean burning diesel
- The number of routes could vary in the future

**The following options  
were presented to Zoning**



## OPTION 1 - ORIGINAL CONSOLIDATED IN ESTIMATE



**BUS LOT DESIGN OPTIONS**  
NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

**LANGAN**

**JCJ** ARCHITECTURE

1/10/2010 / 2012-2013 / © JCJ ARCHITECTURE

## OPTION 2 - ORIGINAL CONSOLIDATED WITH ADDED SCREENING



# Additional Lots Explored

**Options that were reviewed at a high level and deemed not appropriate:**

- **Drop Off Center** - (would require roadway improvement, no State support)
- **Adjacent to MHHS on 302 Ball pond** - (Increased traffic on congested site, significant earthwork required)
- **Between Rebel turf and the dog park** (significant extra costs and loss of reimbursement)
- **HS Practice Field** - (located in upland review area, loss of field)
- **Private Lot on Dunham Drive** - (steep grades at entry)
- **Out of Town** - (Nothing identified to date, additional operating costs)

# Bus lot located out of Town

## What are the implications if the Buses lot is located out of Town?

- The bus company has been consulted and to date they have not been able to locate any available site close to Town.
- Out of Town bus storage would increase district cost:
  - Longer drive to New Fairfield would result in additional staffing costs
  - There would be additional fuel costs
  - If the bus company has to rent a lot this costs would fall on the district
  - The cost of a bus office at the lot would need to be accounted for
  - The district will lose tax revenue (approximately \$35,000)



# Funding Considerations

## 2-21-2020 Discussions with State confirmed the following:

- State support for Consolidated Site - The bus lot would be reimbursed by the State for 38.22% of the cost excluding the bus office
- State support for High School Site – ½ of rate or 19.11% excluding the bus office (*This option would require a new grant authorization*)
- State support if the bus lot was located off school property - None

# **Temporary Bus Lot: Impact at NFHS**

# Current Challenges: Safety

- Buses are in tight quarters
  - Can only park one at a time
- Vehicle Mixing:
  - Buses & Vans
  - Bus driver personal vehicles
  - Student Drivers
  - Public using facilities on school grounds
- Pedestrians
  - Most student drivers crossing two drive lanes to walk up the hill to school
- Students mixing with general public and outsiders
  - Lower lot fully booked with students
  - Outsiders on campus to use dog park, playground, etc. during school hours



# Current Challenges: Safety- Illustration of Congestion





# Current Challenges: Student Parking Capacity

- Over 100 parking spaces lost to bus lot and construction
  - Buses, bus driver personal vehicles, bus company facility take up entire lower stadium lot (“J” lot)
  - Currently ~180 seniors
  - Limited to 120-122 spaces for students
    - Lower Lot (72-74), Temporary Gravel parking (23), 25 spaces intermixed with staff parking
    - **Currently at 122 parking requests for second semester**
- No parking for juniors
  - Challenging for families who need students to work
  - Juniors illegally parking in assigned senior parking spaces
- Limited ability to monitor parking
  - Security and administrative staff focused on the school building and immediate grounds



# Current Challenges: Student Parking Capacity



# Current Challenges: Event/Community Parking Capacity

- Dangerous location at intersection of 3 athletic complexes and public facilities
  - Rebels Stadium, Marty Morgan Field, Komlo field, J.J. Pendergast Field, Cashman Field, dog park, playground, basketball court, bocce courts
  - Vehicle Mixing = Safety Concerns
    - NF Buses
      - Large size, multiple trips in/out of bus lot
    - Out-of-town buses
      - Lack of unloading/loading area
      - Lack of familiarity with the campus
    - Bus driver personal vehicles
    - Student drivers
    - NF Parent Drivers (high school & youth sports)
      - Drop-offs of youth program participants in a congested area
    - Out-of town drivers
      - Lack of familiarity with the campus
- Over 100 parking spaces lost to bus lot
- Extremely narrow drive lanes, low pedestrian visibility near pavilion



# Looking Ahead

- Combining School Schedules
  - Additional buses- more congestion, less parking
- 180 seniors and 180 juniors for 2024-2025
  - Stable number for next year
  - Not all registered seniors will get parking if more than 122
  - Current situation would mean no junior parking for a fourth consecutive year
- Future of the temporary gravel lot
  - Approximately 25 student spaces
  - Difficult to maintain
- Control over public use of campus during the school day
  - Ongoing security concern identified by NFPD

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Questions and Answers