

**Memorandum to SBC and interested School's supporters**  
**Prepared by Ken Bassett and Gary Anderson**  
**Date: 29 April 2018**

*This document is offered in the interest of building upon the extensive work of the School Building committee. It is focused on a center for learning in Lincoln that retains the existing campus organization, but recognizes the potential for a creative adaptation that realizes educational goals while containing cost.*

The attached memorandum discusses the potential for a revised Option L2 plan. The urgency for such a plan stems from several observations by members of the public:

- First, the Option L2 plan as currently framed is a weak attempt at a renovation scheme that satisfies educational goals.
- Secondly, and importantly, it is the Option that can be built upon if a project cost below \$85 to \$90 million dollars is to be achieved while meeting educational goals.

The SBC meeting of 25 April was instructive in that several themes were explored that are relevant to preparing a revised L2 Option:

- Lincoln's capacity for debt, either financially or politically, may indicate that cumulative costs for a schools project and a community center be \$100M or less. This may lead to a schools plan that meets a budget rather than a plan that sets a budget.
- The pursuit of schools design that supports new approaches to education can manifest itself in a variety of spatial layouts. Hubs as currently envisioned can be part of that, but so can less formal and arguably imaginative solutions that can be integrated into parts of the existing K-8 complex.

A renovation scheme based on a revised Option L2 can be a stimulating "new" school with a variety of flexible teaching arrangements. As decision time approaches the need for a creative and budget responsive adaptation of L2 seems greater than ever.

## **1. Introduction**

As the day of decision approaches on which school plan and budget will receive support at the June special town meeting, it will be important for the SBC to present a manageable (limited) number of choices relative to educational philosophy, sustainable design, campus site plan, historic values, and last but not least, cost, both initial and over time. To date a variety of plans with associated projections of cost have ranged from basic repair options to full program schemes featuring mostly new construction. Associated projections of cost have ranged from \$49M to \$109M (per option plans dated 9 April 2018).

As community forums have progressed, it has become evident that repair options and renovation options fall short of meeting expectations of educators and many town residents relative to a forward looking investment in our K-8 school. On the other hand,

plans that meet a full program scenario at a cost of \$109M will potentially stress the financial capacity of the Town, particularly when one folds in an expectation of investing \$15M +/- in a new community center as well as unknown future priorities. Based on these observations, the framing of likely choices for discussion at the June town meeting range from Option L1 @ \$73M to Option C @\$95M (again April 9, 2018 plan costs).

While L-1 builds upon a full renovation program by adding new kitchen and dining commons, it falls short from an educational perspective and is likely a distraction from what should be a productive discussion around choices that address educational enhancements. By contrast, Option C @\$95M meets the school's "essential" educational program in a mostly new facility and has received considerable support, its significant cost not-withstanding.

Options L2 @\$79M and L3@\$89M are thus the remaining and likely choices for an alternative, lower cost investment in K-8. However, for an alternative to Option C to be a significantly lower cost choice, a budget some \$10M to \$15M lower than Option C would seem to be needed to be meaningful. While Option L2 meets the goal of lower cost, its features place it at a disadvantage relative to educational goals. Option L3 with its extensive renovations to facilitate a complete program of hubs ends up too close to Option C to arguably be a savings. By extension a modification of L-2 incorporating selective elements of L3 becomes the possible path forward for a focused discussion of limited choices in June: a modified Option L2 compared with Option C

## **2. A Modified Option L2**

Option L3 has received considerable design effort and by way of various floor plan interventions provides hub spaces for grades 3-8 as well as a singular central kitchen and dining commons. Within the framework of the existing L-shaped K-8 school the option creates a strong central focus and main entrance with secondary entries for community access and pre-K access. The cost though of hubs at all grade levels is a premium of \$10M over Option L-2.

L-2 on the other hand seems to abandon hubs altogether in favor of several flex spaces that seem curiously positioned: one near a mechanical room and the expanded Donaldson lobby and one next to Smith Auditorium adjacent to K-2 spaces for which hubs are not seen as a high priority. In addition Option L2 takes a much less imaginative design approach to the arrangement of new classrooms, interconnecting hallway and lobby area when compared to the flow of spaces featured in the same areas of L3. Taking what could be characterized as a weak effort to develop a positive position for a lower cost option, it seems reasonable to commit effort to pursuit of a modified Option L2 that explores a range of possibilities outlined below.

## **3. Potential elements for modified Option L2**

The suggestions for creating modified Option L2 are linked to the various sub-areas of the K-8 existing campus. **(See attached diagrams that identify the general locations of the following suggestions.)**



#### Smith Gym sub-area

1. Incorporate Option L3's PK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade design features including the classroom grouping and adjacent hub space into the area West of Smith Gym. This modification would eliminate the flex space illustrated in L2 in favor of the hub.
2. If a substantial backstage area is no longer needed at Smith, study if this space could be allocated to flex/hub or support uses.

#### Smith connector from existing gym to existing Media Center

3. Eliminate Option L2's long, straight and uninterrupted corridor and incorporate the character of corridor alignment of Option L3.
4. In the new Smith N/S wing, create expanded circulation spaces and alcoves that can also function as convenient locations for learning spaces adjacent to classrooms and/or in locations such as at the north end of the corridor, or as a multi-use learning feature extending west of the lobby/commons.
5. Study selectively extending the new Smith N/S wing eastward in areas to create more "elbow room" for the Media Center/Library, Main Entrance and Administration areas and potentially create options for small learning /flex spaces.

#### Brooks School

6. Incorporate into L2 Option L3's corridor location adjustments around the north side of the internal courtyard (west of Donaldson Auditorium) resulting in a 6-8 grade classroom/hub configuration. Based on the L3 plan, reconfiguration of existing classroom space allows for creation of the hub cluster.
7. Consider active year-round or seasonal learning program for the internal courtyard at the Brooks 6-8 Grade cluster. Evaluate potential infill for music, lab (science or biology greenhouse) or art programs that could utilize high-ceiling spaces with clerestory window or skylights.
8. Option L2 flex space between Donaldson and Reed Gym is isolated from adjacent classrooms. In combination with the existing space, the proposed West Lobby at Donaldson seems excessive for limited community use. Reallocate the flex space to other areas and study shared flex education use of the lobby expansion. Consider hub/flex uses for adjacent classes at the wide corridor/study alcove space south of Donaldson.
9. Study the potential for flexible learning spaces thorough the use of movable walls that can be used to combine classrooms, particularly for the middle school in areas where hubs are not possible or appropriate.

#### **4. Summary**

The goal for suggested changes to L2 is to improve its educational value while containing cost. It is recognized that some of the suggestions add cost, but by being more selective on the addition of hubs and by reallocating the square footage of the two flex spaces the modified Option L2 retains its position as being substantially more economic than Option C.

Secondly, the creation of a educationally strong and yet economic solution to the K-8 school improvement is to recognize long held community values associated with the campus. Those values are not only related to bricks and mortar but also to the dynamic of a central green clearly defined by a sequence of buildings thoughtfully sited over time.

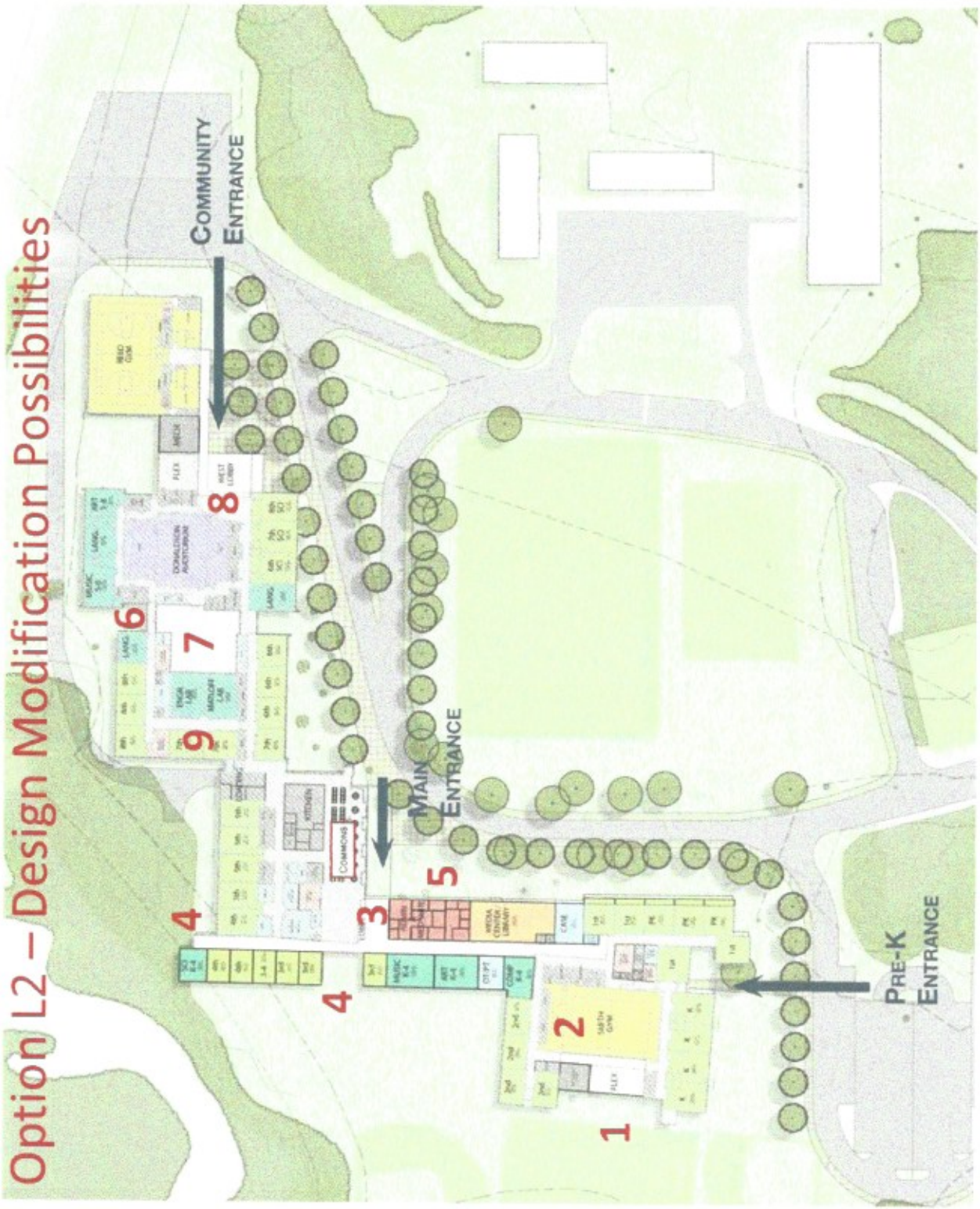
Thirdly, retaining much of the existing infrastructure is to recognize an important tenant of sustainability; that is, renovation/reuse is the most profound form of sustainability-less new construction and less demolition waste going to landfills.

Regarding project costs, supplemental improvements beyond required "Stretch Code" compliance to excellent "EUI" and "Net-Zero" energy performance should continue to be identified as added cost options for the consideration and approval of the community.

Finally, the discussion of cost for schools will at some point need to be integrated with the cost and timing for a community center. Two committees working in parallel have raised expectations for success in the near future. A more economic solution for the schools coupled with a thoughtful and economic solution for the community center can result in a significant step forward for Lincoln.



# Option L2 – Design Modification Possibilities





Option L2 – Smith Gym Design Possibilities







Option L2 – Brooks Design Possibilities