

Zervas Building Project - FAQ's



Can you provide a quick history of how this project came about?

The expansion of the Zervas Project is part of a long-term facilities plan for Newton elementary schools developed over the last seven years to strategically address growing student enrollment and aging facilities in the Newton Public Schools. Over the last dozen years the city has experienced a significant increase in student enrollment prompting the School Committee to begin a comprehensive study identifying and assessing the space needs and physical condition of each of its school buildings. During 2010-2012, the city incorporated this study into a citywide evaluation of all public buildings based on their overall condition, safety, accessibility, capacity, energy needs and all building systems. Many school buildings faced the dual challenge of poor conditions and lack of programming space coupled with capacity challenges to support the city's growing enrollment.

While Angier and Cabot elementary schools were determined by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) as well as the School Committee's consultants to be most in need of repair, rebuilding the Zervas School was prioritized to mitigate significant deficiencies in its aged and undersized space, as well as to support the capacity needs in its centralized location. The centralized location of Zervas provides an important opportunity to add classroom space in an area of Newton experiencing significant enrollment growth. Throughout 2013, Mayor Warren, Superintendent Fleishman, School Committee, members of the Board of Aldermen and many other city and school officials spoke to the community about the citywide, long-term facilities plan. The strategy was endorsed by the community, with the successful passage of the Override ballot, to fund the Zervas School Project, the Angier and Cabot projects and other citywide needs.

What is the schedule for the new building project?

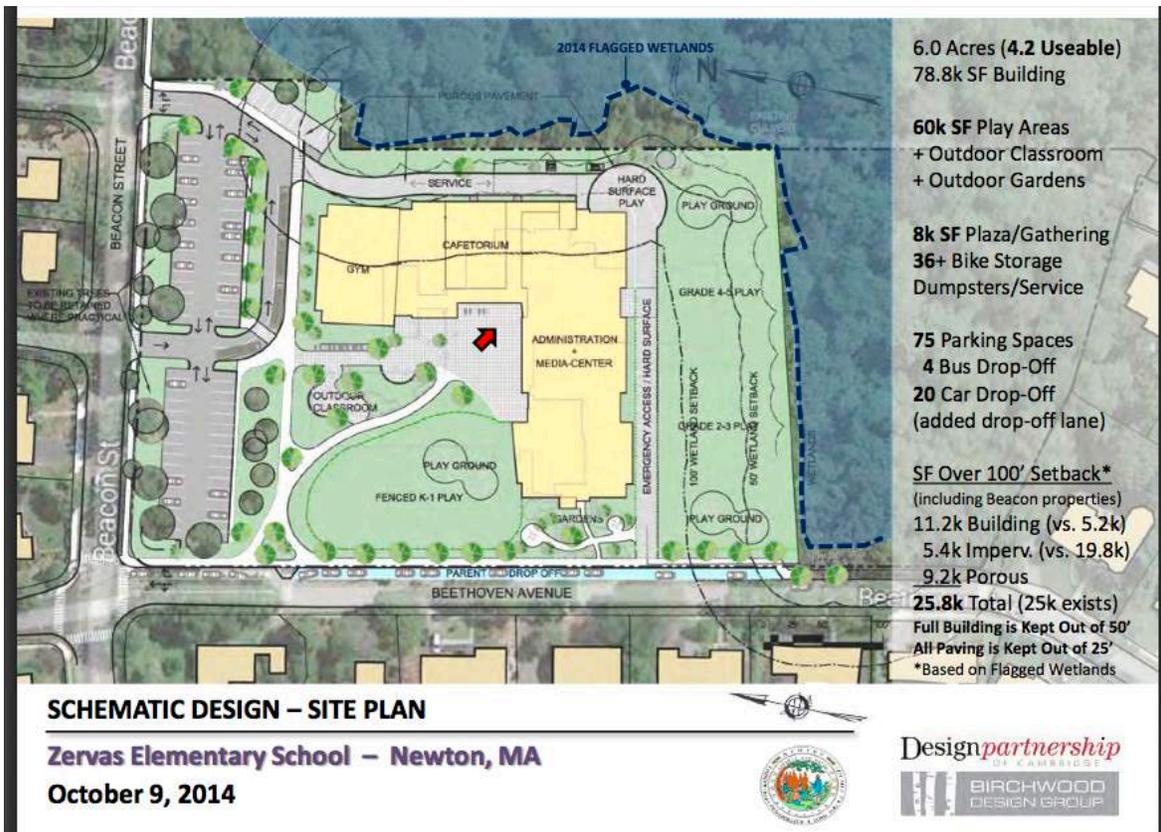
The project schedule follows the completion of the new Angier School construction, and plans for Zervas students and staff to move to the Carr School by January 2016 through June 2017. The schedule then calls for students to move into the newly constructed Zervas School for the opening of school in September 2017.

Where is the Carr School and what is the facility like?

The Carr School is located on Nevada Street in Newtonville. It has been fully renovated with well-lit classrooms, a cafeteria and appropriate spaces for library, art, music and physical education, as well as an accessible entrance and elevator. Play space is on the site and on the adjacent Carr School Playground, which includes a pre-school play area, a minor league baseball diamond, a full basketball court and swings.

What is the design of the new Zervas School?

Schematic Design and Site Plan Layout



Internal Design and Floor Plan



SCHEMATIC DESIGN – FLOOR PLANS

Zervas Elementary School – Newton, MA

October 9, 2014



For more visuals of the Zervas design visit:

- <http://zervas.projects.joslinlesser.com/>
- <http://zervas.projects.joslinlesser.com/download/presentations/2014%2010%2009%20ZSBC%20and%20DRC%20presentation.pdf>

What types of space will there be for educational programs? The space at Zervas is being designed to meet the educational program based on the approved Angier (MSBA) program and in keeping with Massachusetts School Building Authority standards. In addition to 24 regular education classrooms for grades K-5, the building will include classrooms for art, music and special education. A full size gymnasium and cafeteria are included in the design also according to MSBA standards. Breakout spaces for small group instruction are also featured in the plan. The new space will include 69,000 square feet of outdoor play space, which is significantly larger than what exists at Zervas right now. This includes separate play structures for K-1, 2-3 and 3-5 grade level students, two soccer fields and hard surface space.

How is this design being decided?

Many people have been included in the decision-making process around the Zervas Project including the Zervas Working Group (made up of city and school administrators), School Committee members, members of the Board of Aldermen, the [Zervas Project Team of Design Partnership of Cambridge and Joslin Lessor as Owners Project Manager](#), the Zervas School Building Committee (which includes community representatives), and the city of Newton's [Design Review Committee](#).

The Zervas design process includes a feasibility study and schematic design. During the feasibility study, consultants helped the team determine and evaluate whether to renovate, renovate and expand, or build a new Zervas school. The Committee examined and evaluated five layouts on the existing site and five more layouts on a proposed expanded site. At a recent Board of Alderman presentation regarding the acquisition of Zervas Elementary School abutting properties, it was determined that an expanded site would “allow the full educational space program for both interior and exterior programming functions, including play space and on site parking while addressing community concerns, pedestrian safety, setbacks, and traffic impact.” The expanded site is now possible as the Board of Aldermen voted to approve the acquisition of three abutting properties that will add .7 acres to the site, allow for the full educational program, provide green and play spaces including an outdoor classroom area, full emergency access, bus and pedestrian access, parking for staff and some visitors, and a blue zone for parent drop off.

Newton's Design Review Committee has fully endorsed the current design and public input has been provided through a number of meetings. This public feedback has greatly influenced the design. The project will continue with a site plan approval according to the city's process.

Why is the new school going to be bigger than our current school?

Newton has experienced significant enrollment growth over the past 12 years and this growth continues. This year's kindergarten class is one of the largest ever. The system has been short on classroom space and has added modular classrooms and divided up existing space in order to add classrooms and small learning spaces. The Zervas space is emblematic of the challenges we face as a system. Given these challenges, Newton is rebuilding or renovating the first three schools to provide a capacity between 465-490 and 22-24 classrooms.

There are a number of advantages to having four classrooms at each grade level. For example, it will help to ensure that class sizes are held reasonable when there is an unusually large class at a grade level. There will also be sufficient work space for special education teachers and other professionals who work with students in small group settings.

How will students get to the Carr School?

Buses, routes and stops will be arranged for Zervas students just as they have been arranged for current “Angier at Carr” students. The Zervas School Project provides for this transportation and families will be given specific information in the months before January 2016.

What are the plans for managing the transition to Carr School? For students and for families?

We are currently arranging plans for Zervas' transition to the Carr School and will hold informational meetings with the Zervas community closer to the transition time. As outlined in the NPS System Wide Goals, we will create a timeline and review lessons learned from the Angier/Carr move to determine a protocol for future transitions. We will work with teachers and staff regarding moving and packing supports and encourage collaboration between the Angier and Zervas principals and teachers. In addition, the Zervas School Council and the School's Leadership Team will be focusing on specific issues that relate to this project and hope to plan for a smooth transition for all of the school's stakeholders.

What neighborhoods will the new school pull from?

This will be addressed in the student assignment process taking place this school year.

What will be the process for determining expansion of the students who attend Zervas?

The process for revising our student assignment plan will be discussed during the next several School Committee meetings. The process will take place over the course of the school year. There will be plenty of opportunity for public input during this process and communication will be forthcoming.

What is being done to address potential traffic concerns?

Minimizing traffic impact is one of the priority site goals for the Zervas Project. The Project Team is working with the city's traffic management staff to address potential concerns and will be conducting a complete traffic study and safety plan.

Is the design going to incorporate "green" design elements?

Now that the Zervas project is moving from the schematic design phase into the more detailed design development phase, a thorough analysis of green building design components will be studied in the coming weeks.

Energy modeling was conducted during the feasibility study phase to inform some basic decisions on building configuration and orientation. In the current design, classrooms face North and South rather than East and West, to provide better daylighting, maximize even distribution of natural light and minimize problems of glare control. It was also determined that a three-story classroom wing scheme is significantly more energy efficient than a two-story scheme as it provides less roof area and a decreased building perimeter to heat. The building is designed with high efficiency systems, building envelope and is planned to be solar ready if solar panels are not able to be included in the scope. The city is also pursuing a Net Zero Energy design grant to explore the potential of the Zervas School moving toward Net Zero energy use.

The project team will continue to study the energy model including lifecycle analysis of the building systems and components. The intent is for the school to be LEED certified, at a silver status or greater.

In addition to the building's green design, the exterior site itself has minimized paving by containing parking at the edges of the site, preserving as many existing trees on site as possible and creating an outdoor learning environment. The site design also includes the use of rain gardens and bioswales as a green strategy to manage storm-water and recharge the aquifer.

How can I be involved in the new building project?

Zervas School Building Committee (ZSBC) meetings are open to the public. Community input is appreciated and we have already taken many public suggestions into consideration throughout the design evolution.

If you want to receive updates about the progress of the new Zervas School Building Project, you can email "zsbccommunity@gmail.com" with the word "Subscribe" and the community representatives from the Zervas School Building Committee will add you to the distribution list. Please also feel welcome to attend School Council meetings (listed on the [Zervas school website](#)), and Dr. Beck's Principal Coffees on Oct. 17, 2014, January 16, 2015, March 6, 2015 and May 15, 2015. Watch for upcoming informational meetings that will be planned throughout the spring and fall of 2105.

Additional information and presentations can be found on the [Newton School Committee website](#), the [Board of Alderman website](#) and the [Zervas Project Website](#).