



# Town of Simsbury

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*Richard Sawitzke - Town Engineer, Director of Capital Projects*

August 8, 2013

Board of Selectmen  
Town Offices  
933 Hopmeadow Street  
Simsbury, CT 06070-0495

Dear Selectmen:

**Subject: Senior Center Discussion**

Following a public forum to present the Senior Center Needs Assessment and facility locations, the Selectmen requested additional information to provide guidance in their decision making. This letter summarized the findings for a number of the issues and questions that were discussed. The information was developed from meetings with our architect, senior center staff and public building committee, as well as past focus group input from Senior Center users.

Population and Users

A review of 2010 Census data, demographic projections, and Service Center Statistics show:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
55 & older	2010	6,960
55 & older	2030	9,133
55 & older	2012	975 unduplicated Senior Center users

For the several Senior Center programs, the average daily users are 144.

The demographics show the potential for current user increases if program and facility size were increased. At present, not all persons are able to be accommodated at luncheons, and some physical fitness classes. Peak 55 & older population is expected to occur in the period of years 2025 to 2030. With a nearly 30% increase in that age category, increased use would be expected. The Need's assessment program and space requirement targets that projected growth.

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### Aquifer and Wetland Considerations

Questions were raised concerning the Stratton Aquifer relative to the Bushy Hill/Stratton Brook Road site. The site is within the far eastern area of the aquifer. However, surface drainage does not flow towards the well fields, and the site is served by public water and sewer. Thus, water would not be withdrawn through a separate well, nor would subsurface sewage disposal enter the site. While we know that an environmentally sound site plan can be prepared, there will be additional costs associated with surface runoff facilities, and environmental impact statements that residents may wish to have prepared.

The performing arts center site's building area is out of wetlands and floodplains. This site is also served by public water and sewer. Only upland review area permits would be needed.

### Current Priority Needs

The Senior Center and Social Services staffs have identified a number of current limitations. Of these the greatest needs are for parking/drop off area, kitchen/dining room facilities and space, health screening space, confidential social services conference space, and fitness room.

The ability to meet current needs can likely be met with a phased construction program at Eno Memorial Hall. A phased construction program could also be devised for a new building.

### Parking

At present, only 37 parking spaces are available on the Eno Memorial Hall site. Additional parking is available on-street, in the Iron Horse Blvd. lots, and in adjacent business lots (on a very limited basis). During active program times, all spaces are used on a daily basis. A new site could accommodate the full program requirement of 100 spaces.

Our study showed that a parking deck, with structure expansion into adjacent properties, would meet the parking needs for full construction at Eno.

If a phased approach for Eno improvements were to be utilized, a retaining wall along Railroad Street (at greatly reduced cost compared to a parking deck) would allow adding 17 spaces. For large programs, a shuttle service to the Iron Horse Blvd. lots would also be considered.

An interesting possibility is to also provide a multi-purpose room at the Performing Arts Center (PAC). This would allow certain overlapping Community Center meetings and Senior Center programs to occur at the PAC, along with associated parking.

### Facility Operations Costs

Utility and HVAC costs are estimated at \$60,000.00 per year at a new building, \$22,000.00 per year at new full expansion space at Eno, and \$10,750 for a phased construction program at Eno.

At present, the Building and Grounds division needs more staff for its overall operations. A new building would likely require a full time person. A full construction program at Eno would require about a half time person, while an initial phase (of phased construction) would require no additional staffing. Senior Center staffing is difficult to predict because of the variable requirements for types of program offerings.

### Possible Phased Construction Program

On-going discussions have focused on meeting present day fiscal constraints and current Senior Center user's program needs. An interesting scenario that has merit is to relocate SCTV from Eno, reconfigure space and construct a new entry area with a smaller addition, and construct a retaining wall along Railroad Street, rather than a parking deck (for a savings of over \$1m alone).

Reconfigured space would involve using a new multi-purpose room at the PAC for certain community activities, meeting space and some senior exercise programs. There is on-going discussion with the PAC Board regarding this option.

### Possible Phases

- I. Relocate SCTV; Renovate Space for new kitchen and dining room (multi-purpose style); Entry/Drop Off area construction; new construction for physical fitness area and bathrooms; reconfigure space for health screening and offices.
- II. Multi-Purpose Room at PAC
- III. Retaining Wall Parking
- IV. Addition of more new space, as needed
- V. Parking Deck

### Next Steps

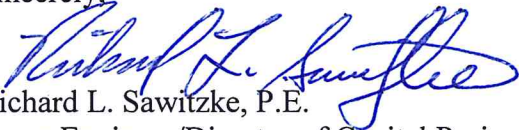
As the Board of Selectmen further considers choices over the next month, I propose that the new entry/drop off area be presented to the State Historic Preservation Office and the Simsbury Design Review Board. The Historic integrity of the Eno Building, along with the functional requirements, especially a drop off/entry area need to be balanced. If your selection is to proceed with the Eno Memorial option(s), comments should be immediately sought for the Historic office and Design review, prior to committing design efforts to the Eno building.

Both a new site, and an Eno or Eno/PAC configuration all have merit. A short term, phased, construction program appears to be able to meet current needs and cost constraints at Eno.

For any site selection you make, our next step would involve requesting Design Development plan funding, as discussed during the recent budget process.

Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Sawitzke, P.E.  
Town Engineer/Director of Capital Projects

cc: Richard Ostop, Chairman, Public Building Committee  
Edward La Montagne, Aging Commission  
Hiram peck, AICP, Director of Community Planning  
Mickey Lecours-Beck, Director of Social Services  
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