



# **THOMAS MEMORIAL LIBRARY Library Improvement Program**

Phase II Report

Prepared  
for the  
**Thomas Memorial Library  
and the  
Town of Cape Elizabeth**



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Milton, Wisconsin

# PHASE II REPORT: Improvement Program

## Executive Summary

The following report presents a recommended program for the long-term improvement of library services and facilities in the Town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine. The improvement program, developed by Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants and Casaccio Architects, is based on considerable interaction with the people of the Town and also reflects the investment of many hours of time by members of the Study Committee.

As documented in the Phase I Report, the existing Thomas Memorial Library facility is deficient in many ways. These deficiencies severely limit the ability of Library staff to offer efficient and high-quality 21<sup>st</sup> century services for the next 20 – 30 years.

No fewer than seven different design concepts (and many additional variations on these themes) were considered by the Study Committee. An early concept involved leaving the old Pond Cove School in place and building a sizable addition. However, this approach offered a minimal increase in parking availability and perpetuated many existing problems. The idea of reprogramming the space in the current facility(ies) was also considered. This approach was rejected because it resulted in minimal gain in spite of significant costs.

In the end, two concepts emerged as the leading contenders for consideration. The “Addition” scenario that is described in greater detail later in this report moves the upper level of the old Pond Cove School closer to Scott Dyer Road and places it on a new, deeper foundation. Other structures on the site are removed and approximately 16,000 gross square feet (GSF) of new library space is constructed at grade. This yields a facility of approximately 22,000 GSF. The cost range for this scenario is between \$5,084,020 and \$7,476,855. The “Clean Slate” concept removes all existing structures and creates a new facility of approximately 21,700 GSF at a cost between \$5,081,640 and \$ 7,784,640.

The costs for both scenarios are quite comparable and, in fact, decisions that might be made regarding the degree to which the old Pond Cove building would be renovated and choices of building materials used could result in either of the concepts being more or less costly. The cost ranges presented for both concepts are very similar.

Based on a dispassionate assessment that places the greatest emphasis on long-term utility and operating efficiency, the library consultants and their architectural partners recommend consideration of the “clean slate” concept.

## Assessment

The Phase I Report presented an extensive set of findings derived from a variety of different assessments of the Thomas Memorial Library's (TML) facilities and services. The report incorporated input gathered from approximately 1,000 Cape Elizabeth residents through surveys, focus groups, and personal interviews. The Phase I Report also cataloged a long list of deficiencies in the Thomas Memorial Library facility that were identified by the consulting team's architectural and engineering partners and through personal interviews with Town employees who are familiar with Library structural, mechanical, and maintenance issues. In short, these assessments revealed a facility that presents significant accessibility challenges, that has dated mechanical and electrical systems, and that wastes valuable staff resources due to its fragmented design.

The library consultants also presented peer comparisons and explored the public's perceptions of the services currently offered by the Library. This assessment revealed that many residents of Cape Elizabeth are quite satisfied with the Library facility and its services. At the same time however, a large majority of the public indicated that they believe the Library should be fully accessible to the elderly and to those with disabilities, should employ efficient heating and cooling systems, and should maximize staff efficiency. In other words, although the public loves the Thomas Memorial Library for its unconventional (one person characterized it as "quirky") design, residents also believe that the library should be accessible to all and that it should operate at peak efficiency.

The public identified additional service improvements that would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement given the constraints of the existing facility. Although convenient access to resources not held by TML through the State of Maine's "MINERVA" program was greatly appreciated, many wished that TML's own collection was larger and broader in scope. Expansion of the collection in the existing facility would require the elimination of seating (which is already limited) or public access computers (the number of which is also substandard for a community of Cape Elizabeth's size).

The public also consistently made the case for more and improved meeting space. Many expressed the desire for more programming on a variety of topics of interest for adults as well as meeting spaces that could be used by community organizations. The Library's existing meeting room is inadequate and is extremely unattractive. Accessibility is poor, the ceiling height is substandard, air quality is poor, and noise from the adjacent mechanical room often makes it difficult to hear the content that is presented in meetings.

The accessibility issues that were detailed in the Phase I Report coupled with a limited amount of quiet, comfortable reading and study space means that very few residents of the community see the library as a destination where they are likely to spend an entire afternoon or an evening. Instead, visits are routinely 30 minutes or less with many consisting of no more than picking up materials that have been reserved online.

Finally, residents expressed a desire for the provision of exciting, engaging space for children and teens. A colorful, whimsical children's space that engages youngsters as they are introduced to the world of books and reading was a high priority even for many residents in households without children. Providing quality space that attracts teens was also seen as a community need.

The Thomas Memorial Library is already a "good" library. It offers a standard array of services and meets the basic library and information needs of many Cape Elizabeth residents. However, community demographics, which are extremely favorable for heavy public library use, indicate that TML could be a GREAT library. The existing facility severely limits the Library's ability to extend and improve its services.

## Space Needs

The existing TML complex provides approximately 15,000 square feet of space. This is not exceptionally small for a library serving a community of less than 10,000 people. While many examples of larger libraries serving similar populations could be cited (and some, in fact, are in the peer comparisons presented in the Phase I Report), many smaller libraries can be identified as well. What severely limits TML's ability to provide expanded and enhanced services is a combination of factors. They are as follows:

1. The existing space is fragmented and inefficient. The design of the structure demands that many square feet be devoted to corridors connecting the various components of the building.
2. The demographics of the people of Cape Elizabeth are exceptional for library use. Significantly greater use is predicted if enhanced facilities are provided.
3. A portion of the existing facility is devoted to ancillary services (Cape Elizabeth Historic Preservation Society and gallery space used largely by the Art Commission).

The consultants developed a spreadsheet detailing the space needs of the Library at five year increments for the next 20 years. In fact, nearly all the space deficit discovered is "near-term." The stability of the population and projections that show little or no significant population growth means that if the community were to build a library facility to meet near-term (five-year) needs, the resulting structure would very likely be sufficient in size to meet ten, twenty, and thirty year needs as long as a relatively open plan that could be reconfigured to meet changing priorities was implemented.

The consultants calculate that a facility of approximately 19,500 gross square feet (GSF) would be needed to meet core library needs. Providing adequate quality space for the Cape Elizabeth Historic Preservation Society and space for both three dimensional and wall-hung art displays would require an additional 2,000 – 3,000 gross square feet of space.

The additional space envisioned would be distributed among many different identified needs. Space for collections would be increased modestly as would space for public

access computer workstations. The entire children's services area would increase significantly in size. The space allocated for teens would increase modestly. However, both the children's space and the teen space would be designed to provide the targeted audiences with an experience that entices and encourages use by school children of all ages.

Both study seating and leisure seating for adults would be increased, albeit, rather modestly. What would change more dramatically are the environments within which these types of seating will be placed. Space designed for quiet, solitary study as well as for collaborative learning and social interaction would be provided.

The quality of meeting room spaces would be enhanced and both the size and variety of types of meeting spaces would be increased. Finally, staff workspaces would be improved and both "off-the-floor" workroom space and appropriate storage spaces for supplies, equipment and gift materials would be included.

## **Concepts**

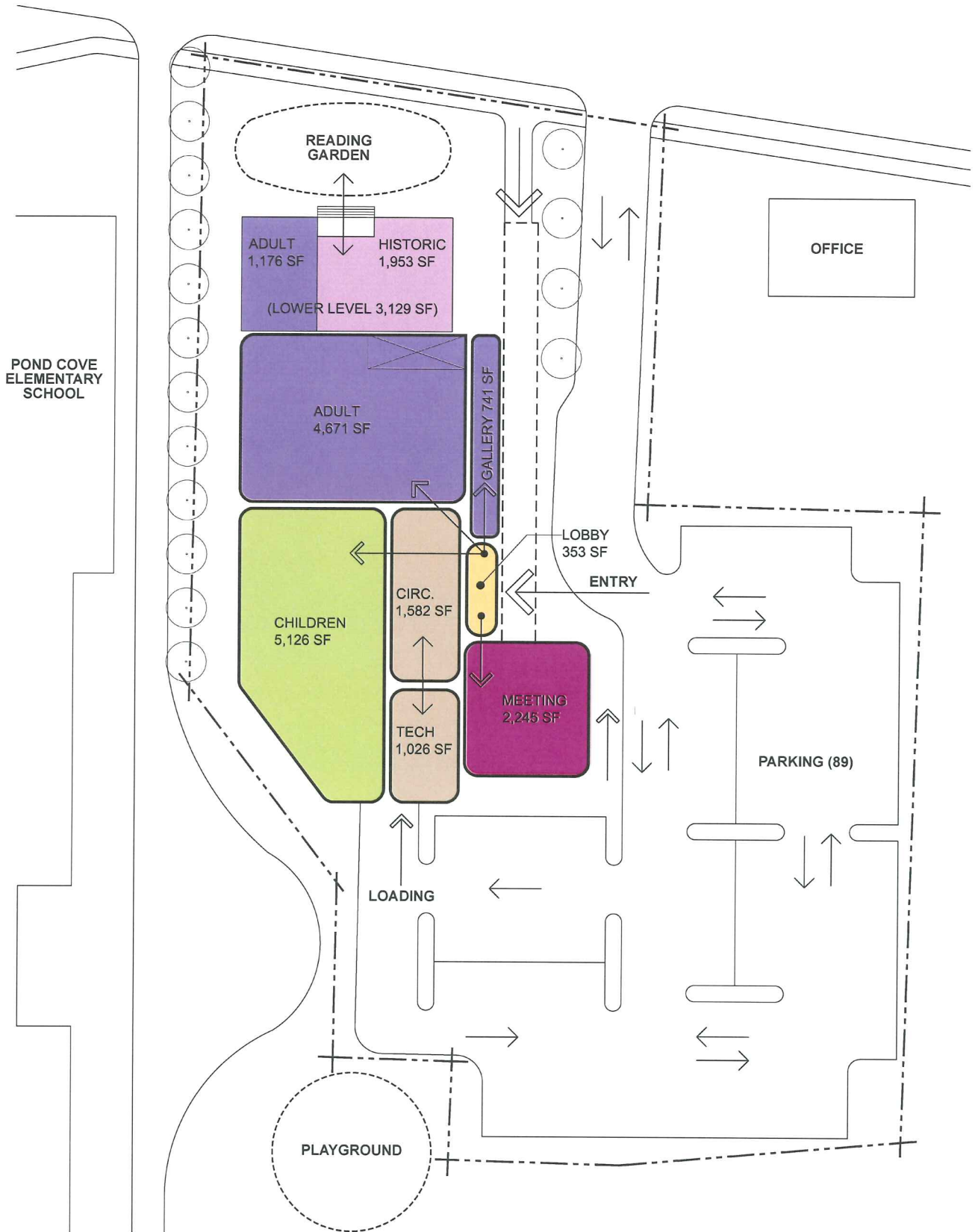
### Reprogramming Existing Space

A reprogramming of space in the existing facility and no fewer than seven separate design concepts were considered by the Library Study Committee. After careful consideration, the path of reprogramming existing space was rejected. It was determined that the configuration of the existing footprint of the building simply cannot support the range of services that were envisioned by the public. Furthermore, the expense involved in updating the current facility was seen as producing a poor return on investment. In short, considerable money might be spent to solve a few problems, but many other problems and inefficiencies would remain.

### Addition Scenario

Several addition concepts were considered. Most reused the Pond Cove building and several attempted to preserve the old Pond Cove and Spurwink schools while eliminating the more recent "connector addition. After lengthy deliberation, the Study Committee selected an addition concept that would preserve the old Pond Cove building but would move it forward on the Town-owned property and would place it on a new, somewhat deeper foundation. The concept presented on the next page is comprised of a two story section (the upper level of the old Pond Cove building on the new foundation) and a single story addition.

The single story addition would provide 15,744 GSF of new space. A new, far more usable basement would be placed under the old Pond Cove building and would provide an additional 3,129 GSF of space. A total of 3,129 GSF of the main level of the old Pond Cove building would be renovated. This concept appears on the next page.



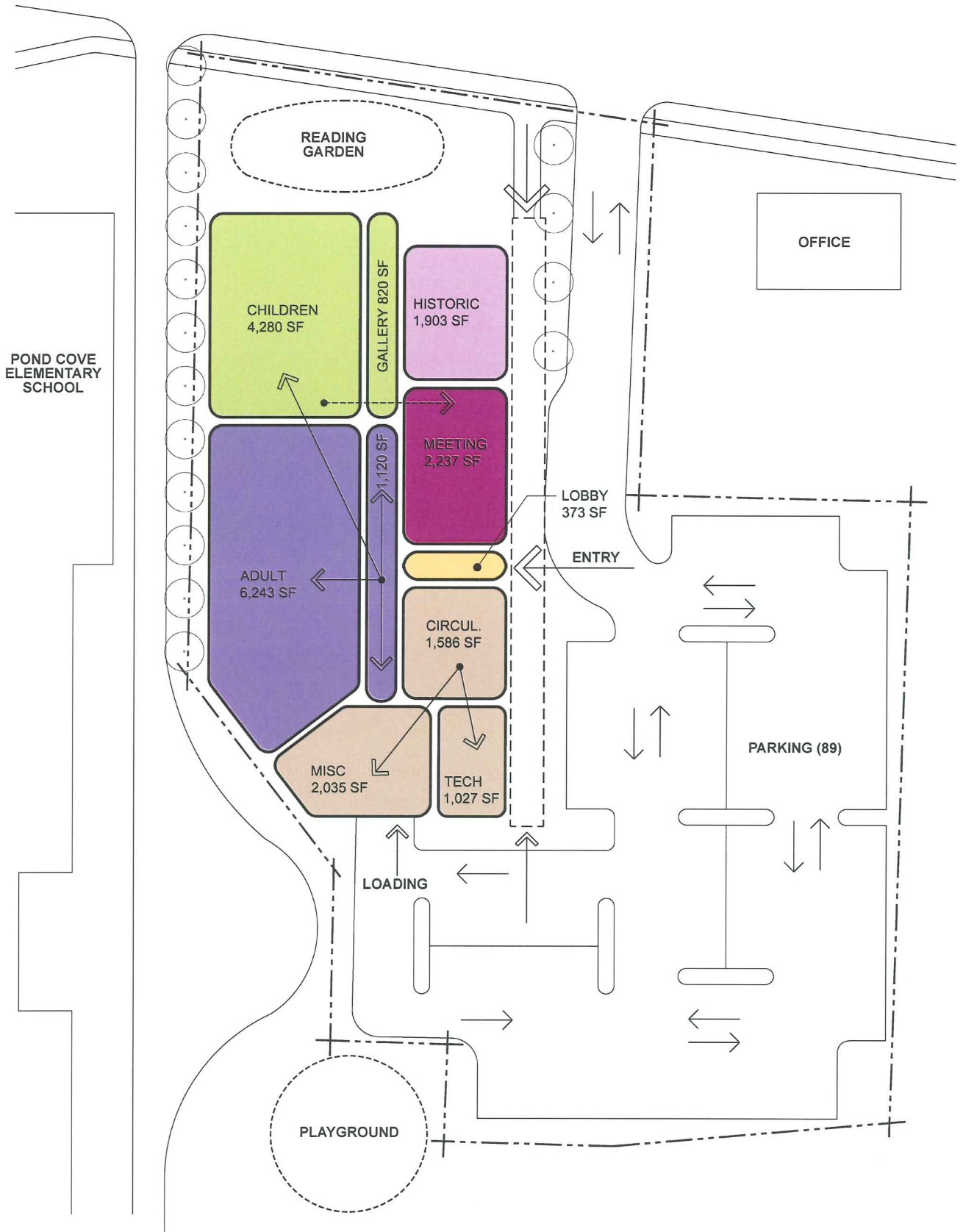
CONCEPT PLAN  
SCHEME D (REVISED) 0 8 16

## Clean Slate Scenario

The “clean slate” scenario would remove all existing structures and a new single story library of approximately 21,624 GSF would be built. This structure is slightly smaller than the addition scenario in part because the addition scenario would require space for “vertical transportation” (elevator and stairs).

A drawing of the clean slate scenario is presented on the following page.

In both concepts, portions of the Spurwink School would be incorporated in the design. A design based on the “addition” concept could use elements of the Spurwink building in the new construction that would be added to the old Pond Cove School building. Architectural elements of both the old Pond Cove School and the Spurwink School could be included in a design based on the “clean slate” concept.



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## Costs

Following are comparative costs for the two approaches. An explanation of how costs were calculated is presented first.

### A NOTE ABOUT COSTS

Costs for constructing and equipping libraries vary widely based on a host of factors ranging from prevailing wages for the construction trades and shortages of building materials to the type of construction and the quality of materials and equipment used. The best source of data on library construction costs comes from *Library Journal (LJ)*, one of the major professional journals in the field of library science. Each December, *Library Journal* reports on library building projects that have been completed during the previous year. While not every new library and/or renovation is listed, the sample is large enough to be instructive. The December 2008 issue of *LJ* reported on 95 new library buildings and on 88 Addition, Renovation, and Remodel (ARR) projects.

Construction costs for the 95 new buildings ranged from \$76.19 to \$607.42 per GSF. However, a relatively small number of projects reported construction costs of less than \$200 per GSF and average construction costs per GSF was \$241.12. Average equipment costs for the 95 new construction projects amounted to \$32.86 per GSF. It is important to note that these costs reflect only construction and equipment. Site acquisition costs, and a host of other project costs, are not reflected. When these costs are added, the average cost for projects in 2008 was \$ 328.92 per GSF.

Costs for addition and renovation projects are variable as well. As can be imagined, it is particularly hard to track unit costs when projects may have different mixes of new construction and renovated space and widely differing levels of renovation. Nevertheless, the cost per gross square foot for the 88 ARR projects in 2008 was \$187.90.

To provide some guidance regarding relative costs, we will report new construction costs as a range from \$200 - \$325 per GSF and equipment costs at \$ 35 per GSF. An amount of \$ 190 per GSF will be applied to renovation costs in areas that would undergo significant renovation (this cost includes equipment). A cost of \$ 125 per GSF will be applied to areas undergoing moderate renovation and a cost of \$ 100 per GSF will be applied in areas receiving minimal renovation. All costs will be expressed in 2009 dollars. An inflation factor should be applied to determine more accurate costs when a construction schedule is established.

A final note regarding costs is in order. Although it may seem contrary to conventional wisdom, the current status of the economy provides an excellent opportunity for moving forward on a building project. Both construction costs and bond rates are favorable.

#### ADDITION SCENARIO COSTS

Applying the cost ranges mentioned earlier, this option would cost between \$ 5,084,020 and \$7,476,855.

##### Low End of Cost Range

New Construction (at grade)	15,744 GSF	\$200	\$3,148,800
New Construction (basement)	3,129 GSF	\$200	625,800
Equipment	22,002 GSF	\$35	\$770,070
Moderate Remodeling (upper)	3,129 GSF	\$150	\$469,350
Low Range Moving Costs (Pond Cove)			\$45,000
Low Range Demolition Costs*			<u>\$25,000</u>
			\$5,084,020

##### High End of Cost Range

New Construction (at grade)	15,744 GSF	\$325	\$5,116,800
New Construction (basement)	3,129 GSF	\$275	\$860,475
Equipment	22,002 GSF	\$35	\$770,070
Extensive Remodeling (upper)	3,129 GSF	\$190	\$594,510
High Range Moving Costs (Pond Cove)			\$90,000
High Range Demolition Costs*			<u>\$45,000</u>
			\$7,476,855

\*Demolition costs include disconnecting utilities as well as the demolition of the existing basement.

## CLEAN SLATE SCENARIO COSTS

Applying the cost ranges mentioned earlier, this option would cost between \$5,081,640 and \$ 7,784,640.

### Low End of Cost Range

New Construction (at grade)	21,624 GSF	\$200	\$4,324,800
Equipment	21,624 GSF	\$35	<u>\$756,840</u>
			\$5,081,640

### High End of Cost Range

New Construction (at grade)	21,624 GSF	\$325	\$7,027,800
Equipment	21,624 GSF	\$35	<u>\$756,840</u>
			\$7,784,640

Cost for the addition scenario and the clean slate scenario DO NOT include costs for demolishing and/or moving the current structures with the exception of moving the Old Pond Cove School on the site and demolishing the existing basement in the addition scenario. These site preparation costs are difficult to estimate because there may be an opportunity to move one or both of the school structures off site in the event that an individual or organization wishes to preserve or restore one or both structures.

## Ranking of Scenarios

In the end, the community itself will play the most important role in ranking the scenarios. What follows is a brief, dispassionate assessment of each of the three approaches: 1) reprogramming existing space, 2) the “addition” scenario, and 3) the “clean slate” scenario.

As has already been addressed, the reprogramming approach represents a “band-aid” approach that makes compromises that are unacceptable. Although a considerable amount of money could be spent attempting to rearrange services within the current facilities, these efforts would yield only marginal benefits. The Library would still be unable to fully carry out the program of service desired by the community and expansion of services would still be virtually impossible. The community would receive

very little for its expenditure on reprogramming. The consultants reject this approach as even a short-term fix for existing deficiencies.

Both of the other approaches have compelling arguments in their favor. The addition scenario preserves a piece of Cape Elizabeth's history and results in a Library that arguably would create a symbolic connection between the past and the future. On the other hand, the clean slate approach allows for a facility that is designed to achieve the greatest level of efficiency from the ground up.

Based purely on a cost-benefit analysis that gives the greatest weight to functionality, the clean slate scenario ranks the highest of the three approaches in the consultants' opinion. Although the clean slate approach is slightly more costly than the addition scenario, the library space that would be created would simply achieve a higher level of efficiency and would afford a higher level of library services than would result from reusing a portion of the old Pond Cove School.

Factors such as a multi-level design and adjusting functional spaces to fit within existing space constraints result in lower efficiency. Access to the multiple levels would require an elevator and the accompanying ongoing costs related to elevator maintenance. Supervision of areas located on separate levels, a serious issue in the current facility, would continue, albeit at a reduced level, under the addition scenario.

Finally, the issue of location should be addressed. A new library could conceivably be built at a site other than the current Scott Dyer Road location. As the Study Committee is painfully aware, the existing site imposes significant limitations even under the clean slate approach. The long, narrow, irregular site creates vehicular traffic flow issues and limits parking. At the same time, the site is seen by the public as being convenient. Another argument in favor of the existing site is that it strengthens the concept of creating a "town center" in the Ocean House/Scott Dyer area.

The highest level of operating efficiency would be accomplished if a new library facility was built on a somewhat larger site (approximately 2.5 - 3 acres would be ideal). However, not just any 2.5 – 3 acre site would do. The site would ideally be centrally located, highly accessible and highly visible. Cost considerations would also play an important role in determining whether the current site or an alternative site should be used.