



# PUBLIC INFORMATION & INPUT SESSION

New City Hall Project

Harrisonburg City Council Chambers  
409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

COMMENT SHEET-Responses

October 16, 2013  
4:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

27 - Paper comment sheets completed

54 – Online surveys completed (58 surveys were started but only 54 were fully completed)

**81 – Total Comments received**

64 – Individuals signed in at the public information and input session

**Do you reside, own property, or both in the City of Harrisonburg?**

20 reside    10 own property    44 both    11 N/A

**Online Question: Did you attend the public information session on Wednesday, October 16?**

11 Yes    46 No    1 Skipped the question

**1. Was the information presented at tonight's public information session easy to understand?**

25 Yes    2 No

- No, is it appropriate to show a full rendering only of the site that obliterates the view of the historic building
- It was clear that the atrium was favored by the architect because it was the only one with full color renderings on display. The handout presentation of options was much less bias
- Yes, the architectural drawings and staff on hand was very helpful. I was very impressed. I support site #6 (original site) The atrium preserves the view of south side of the existing Municipal Building
- Yes, in its limited scope. Should have been additional city locations to review.
- The information and "guides" were so biased in favor of the architect's site #6 which is the most objectionable from historical preservation and the long term legacy of this council.

## 2. Did this session meet your needs/expectations?

28 Yes                      7 No                      50 No Answer

- Elevations of the building positioned on the north side of the Municipal Building would have been helpful.
- I thought the downtown park was going to be part of the presentation: my mistake. Otherwise, yes: met my needs
- I would have preferred a public meeting with open discussion allowing all to hear and discuss. This should have come before design work.
- I expect the City to allow the Planning Commission to consider the general location, extent and character of the buildings as required by Virginia Code.
- Insignificant in its timing, structure and duration.
- The visual presentation of the designs was clear and informative. However, the accompanying commentary (the pros/cons) was very skewed toward one view--Mr. Mather's original design, which is option #6. An indication of just how skewed is the fact that after the reviewing the design options, no where in the form (this one) is there a query about which design one likes best . . . and why one design is preferable over another. In the end it feels very disingenuous.
- Expectation was that input precede any decisions regarding location and/or design of most significant structure I will see in my lifetime. Not pleased with suburban, strip mall feel of current options. Info on Planning Commission role in this process was conspicuous by its absence. Why do so few get to decide so much ... and with so little expertise?
- the information seemed a tad slick and designed for a prejudiced viewpoint!
- The information presented appeared to be biased toward site #6. For instance, the only realistic rendition presented was the one designed for site #6. This design was then transferred to the other sites where it clearly does not fit. On sites #4 & 5, it was drawn as a white building that looks out of place, over-sized and unappealing. Designs should be site specific. I would have preferred a public charrette as requested by the Council, wherein site location could be openly discussed by our community, instead of a written-only comment session. Open sharing fosters agreement. Isolated comments do not. Also, if the purpose of the session, and of this online survey, is to determine public preference for a particular site, why was that question not specifically asked?
- It was helpful to see the poster boards and to talk to employees about the plans.
- I had expected to see views of all sites expressed as was done for site #6-particularly the visibility of the Muni Building from Main street, elevations, front views etc. to enable a fair comparison.

### 3. How much should the city's site selection be driven by other non-city projects?

- The “plan our park” proposal should be considered to maximize the use of this space for community development.
- As the downtown cape plan recommends, we should develop a master plan for the Site that includes all Stakeholders- the city, the farmers market NEG & POP.
- It should be a dynamic, but the question really is, “what is best for the city?” The park follows, not leads.
- The city site selection should be done as part of an overall master plan for the area, including the proposed POP parks
- The city's site selection should be driven by a Comprehensive Plan and then part of an overall plan as was mentioned by the Downtown Streets cape plan that was made available for public comment.
- Certainly ongoing discussions of a public park as well as the plans in the Comprehensive Plan should be considered
- Very much so.
- Very little (2 responses)
- Do not need another park in downtown-
- Site selection must take into consideration the scale and historic character of the adjoining area, regardless of who owns the property or proposes a use that falls within zoning regulations.
- Non-city projects? JMU, Ice House, Farmers Market? If JMU, no if farmers market, their thoughts should be considered. the proposed park? Not really
- Somewhat, but not priority
- Not sure what is meant here but collaboration w/ all pertinent groups is best
- Should not be
- Very important. In choosing site #6 the integrity to a city park to the south & west will remain nearly 100% intact. The other sites will seriously compromise the green spaces that already exist.
- Not at all. I think the city-owned property should first be used to meet the needs of the city mgr., com. of revenue, treasurer, real estate, IT, registrar, and community development. After that, other considerations other considerations could be looked at.
- Extremely → the non-city projects of the Plan our Park & Northend Greenway are highly affected by the site selection, Please work with these non-city public projects
- Not (2 responses)
- Not much
- Collaboration is always more valuable than competition. Architect & park planners should have worked in concert since the outcome effects everyone.
- (And please don't read the following as me being angry. I'm just observing & commenting, calmly.) :^) I have no idea what the survey question above means. What is "city's site selection"? Do you mean "How much should the selection of the site plan for the New City Hall Project be driven by ...?" Or do you mean the "city's site selection process"? And what are "other non-city projects"? As a citizen who helps pay for these projects, I would appreciate it if such questions were worded in a way that most people can understand it. (And having taught basic as well as college-level literacy & writing, I have a pretty good idea of what most people can comprehend.) Next time, please get someone who is a non-legalese person to check the entire survey for appropriateness and clarity before publishing it. ;^)  
Thanks!
- All thoughts on this project should be solely based on the need of citizens of the City. The staffs having the proper environment in order to conduct and protect all sensitive information the City receives and documents that has to be retained.
- Well, I think the selection should take into account other projects that impact public space. The municipal building is a public building obviously -- it should be considered in the context of other publicly utilized spaces.
- I can not speak knowledgeably regarding those priorities/other projects.
- All projects, city or private, should be examined in context of comprehensive urban plan. We are the city with the planned future, after all. If this is referring to the park, why wouldn't the design of the larger space effect site selection? In what world would the architect and the park planners not collaborate? All stakeholders need to be part of the process.

- everything in balance
- I think there should be a respectful balance. However, I think the city should take precedence in any stalemate situation.
- I don't know enough about this to comment.
- Site selection should be driven by cost first and your goal of retaining green space. Restaurant tax is atrocious in Harrisonburg; you should do everything possible to reduce spending and lower that tax rate.
- 0%
- Site selection for the new City Hall should definitely co-ordinate with long-term plans for the area, both city-driven and non-city, such as an expanded Farmers Market, expanded parking deck availability, and an adjacent park.
- Should collaborate/cooperate
- I don't understand the point of this question. Offer specifics.
- It should be of high priority.
- Site selection should be decided on what is best for ALL. It should have as little effect as possible.
- I'm not sure.
- Every consideration should be given to all projects. If a project is in the City, it is a City project. Whether public or private is irrelevant. Doing otherwise would be defined as poor planning.
- What "other non-city projects"?
- Unclear what "non-city" means. Privately funded? Outside the city borders?
- Without knowing to what is being referred, it's difficult to offer an opinion.
- The city should strive to consider all the existing and proposed projects to improve this area, including the Farmers Market and the proposed park. I don't think visibility of the Farmers Market from Main St. is a primary consideration now that the Market is so well established and recognized.
- This project should be top priority.
- City-owned development should complement master planning goals and set standards that private/non-city projects will seek to emulate.
- Should not impact decision
- A holistic approach should be used to ensure that visibility of and accessibility to the municipal building is reached.
- non-city projects should influence this project a very little amount
- None. The City Hall is a more immediate need in order for the government to function at its best. Private plans that are still in the early planning stages can be readjusted.
- Consideration should be given to work done by Plan Our Park, Streetscape group, Downtown Renaissance, City Codes re historic preservation
- I think they should be taken into consideration, but ultimately what's best for the city is what's best for the city.
- It depends on the project in a case-by-case basis. The Northend Greenway is a great example of a nearby project that is now City sponsored, but which got huge momentum and up-front funding from private citizens. A similar "Plan our Park" project group has contributed over \$100,000 toward a design and planning phase to look at nearby property - the results of which would ultimately be turned over to the City to complement existing and planned improvements to the area. Groups like this should be regarded as a huge benefit to the City, and the goals of their projects and the private resources they bring to benefit the City should not be overlooked in the planning process.
- I don't understand the question
- Not sure I understand this question, but I think the site selection should be driven by whatever maximizes the efficiency of conducting City business. To that effect I think it's in the City's best interest to take a higher priority over non-City projects.
- 25% do what is best for the city and not the park.
- I do not understand this question. The site selection should be based on aesthetics of the downtown streetscape, historical preservation, appropriateness for efficient use by city offices, and the integration of the new building into the overall master plan/vision for the Turner Pavilion park idea.

- There has been a lot of talk about a city park in that area, it would be nice to see that being considered and part of this plan.
- City should not let dubious private projects drive their decision making.
- I think there should be some consideration, especially the idea of a larger park in relation to the Farmer's Market.
- Don't understand this question.
- It should all be in balance and working together. Good things can happen.
- This question is confusing and potentially leading. I think that our city staff and decision makers should seek alignment with community interests. If these interests are represented through "non-city" projects, such projects need to be vetted for their private interests/agenda (to a few or many), community benefit, etc. If this is referring more directly to the Plan Our Park project, I feel it would be wise to seek collaboration. We're at a unique point in Harrisonburg's development and we have a unique opportunity to take a broader, better design approach to how we create our public spaces.
- None (7 responses)
- The City is a player in community affairs-can influence most aspects of urban life. The City should be in tune with private/ citizen efforts to adapt to and preserve unique aspects of architecture and urban design.

4. Which is the most important consideration to you in relation to this project? Please circle one or list your consideration.

Total Cost	Site Location	Disruption of City Services	Building Layout	Other (no answer)
9	39	7	14	16

- Appearance of building and appropriate blend with adjacent properties
- Development of entire property in a way that considers all stakeholders. This can be a spectacular part of the city
- 2 Building Layout 3 Disruption of City Services (This is temporary especially for a building will serve grandchildren)
- 4 Total Cost. We can afford quality and an in depth planning process.
- Isn't the site already established?
- If a new structure is constructed, it needs to be LEED certified.
- Cost is important but the others are almost equal.
- 2 Site Location 3 Total Cost 4 Disruption of City Services
- \*Care should be made to solicit input from the employees who work here everyday.
- Green space, Community Enhancement
- Cost is a close second
- Preservation of present building
- Total cost always important
- Long-term efficiency & effectiveness of the new complex.
- accessibility
- form following function. Aesthetics and access.
- Preservation of historic muni building most important aspect of this project. Anything that reduces it is tragic, whether attached or separated by an atrium. Can't imagine other cities considering such a travesty.
- sustainability and aesthetics
- Existing city community services building operations should not be disrupted until construction of new completed.
- Be able to keep the old school building and tie the new facility into that building.
- I only hope that the City considers several city projects that are already in the minds of the citizens when they make the decision that will effect all of them.
- Preserving character of original building
- We citizens have the obligation to consider all the above. This project will represent Harrisonburg for decades. This is not the time for speed, it is the time for contemplation. We have the talented residents and stake holders. Given time and process the relationship of this important structure to the community will develop. This survey is first step of many. I ask it not be a fait accompli.
- Historical preservation, followed by site location
- conservation of historic & cultural resources
- accessibility that exceeds minimal ADA requirements
- \*Having square footage that can accommodate city needs for many years to come.
- Maximizing efficiency of doing city business.
- place some functions in the existing building
- Best solution when all of the above are weighed and considered
- Favor enhancing the beauty of the downtown, as Charlottesville has done.

- Visual integrity
- Preserving History
- Site #4 is the best because set back from Main St and separated from the Municipal bldg

**5. What aspects of a new City Hall would make it easier for citizens to access the services within the building?**

- Elevator & signage
- Simple, clear internal layout
- First, as many services as possible should be available on the city's website and this will reduce the need for public movement through the building. Second, touch screens within the building that will give directions how to get place to place
- Adequate parking orientation to Main St. preferred vs. liberty
- Front door parking as in site #1
- Public spaces/offices should be on the first floor to accommodate city residents who need to use services
- Aligning Campbell street w/ parking entrance
- Parking and access to entrances
- Handicapped parking will be on the same side of the building as front entrance. Currently customers do not know to use parking between Municipal building and old school board.
- Parking in front of building off S. Main St.
- Having open area & public meeting space
- Parking access, possible drive-thru for treasurer's office, high-speed elevators to get to upper floors will make it easier for the public
- Being an intrgal part of downtown community → don't focus on parking
- Visible from street, parking
- Adequate parking pedestrian friendly
- Easy parking, info desk with a human
- HP accessible Clear signage
- Handicap access
- No steps, easily accessible from parking
- That all depends on design and location
- Overall layout. Easy to see where you want to go. That is why the 2 buildings should be separate.
- good, clear signage! :^) - place the most-commonly used services nearer to the entrance that is closest to the visitor & short-term parking - ability to enter & exit the building from multiple entrances (rather than walking around it to get in one main

- Possibly drive up service or express payment station within for those with bill and payment in hand.(credit card payment option).
- Two entrances -- one from Liberty Street, one from Main. Clear signage.
- ADA accessibility, a pictorial map/directory (as is often found in shopping malls), online information regarding location of offices/services within the new and renovated structures, readily legible signage
- All well-designed new facilities are by nature fully accessible. Main Street parking unnecessary and ugly. True governmental transparency ... council chambers behind glass and visible to passing citizenry during sessions? Possibly a one-story chamber with green roof accessible to citizens and staff. Restrooms and storage for Farmers Market and park.
- on-line resources, bike path to a drop box, a lovely green environment.
- site 6
- The building should be accessible directly off of Main Street, and most citizen services should be located on the ground floor (concurrent with the existing Municipal building).
- Adjoining existing building. Parking that's easy to get to from either S. Main or Liberty. Parking that is close to the building.
- Layout and staffing of offices within the building.
- Having a user friendly and identified front door, which could be from Liberty street where parking exists.
- Clearly access from the street and parking - I am in favor of Main street visibility and access as well as the enhanced green spaces to blend new facility and improved look and feel to our downtown area - parking should be out back
- Close parking. Handicap accessibility. Good signage (directions/instrucions), well lit.
- Parking near the entrance which would close to the department that a person is visiting.
- Handicap access.
- Location, parking, acceissiblity
- handicap ramps
- Handicapped spaces near entrance
- There is an opportunity to look at this project as the start of defining our priorities as a community. Vehicle parking should be limited to only those with physical challenges. With technology we don't have the same set of access concerns we had ten years ago. It will be much less need ten years from now.
- Good signs, wide stairwells, good elevators
- Handicap accessibility, visibility from Main street and clear wayfinding signs once in the building.
- Helpful signage
- I think parking behind is fine as long as their is a convenient entrance and elevator there.
- Parking & entrances in both front & rear of building
- signage, circulation (pedestrian, public transit, auto) access. Trend toward electronic access to services should also be considered.
- Having everything in one common joined location
- Drive thru window for payments; entrance for handicapped easy to see and access; City manager's office on 1st floor;
- Close parking, universal design for ease of access and clear signs of where to reach services/offices within the building
- One Level, or elevator service for handicap persons.
- Clear signage in the entrance and halls, or a welcome desk of sorts. Even an explanation on the signs of the difference between Treasurer and Revenue's offices would be beneficial.

- Convenient parking
- Signage to direct citizens to correct entrances and prominent, permanent signage within the building. Easy pedestrian access from adjacent sidewalks and convenient bicycle and stroller parking.
- Having multiple departments under one roof in the heart of downtown is the easiest way for citizens to access city services.
- Directional signs like the ones at the County building.
- If accessed from Liberty street, parking at the front door. With public function on the first floor
- I have no problems accessing services now and don't expect to have any when the new building is opened. I do think that ADA access should be improved in the new building.
- One central City Hall complex with departments easily found and accessible to the public.
- Clear main entrance.
- No thoughts on this matter.
- Location and parking
- Call it City Hall. Have open doors. Currently, you have to literally "open" the doors to enter a public department which creates a barrier and feeling of "not welcome." Have a clear entrance with a layout that is intuitive (thus not needing poor looking signs to direct you to where you need to go to ask a question). Multi-lingual signage. Computerized kiosks for payments of simple, common things. Put a group/org that is community-oriented in City Hall to "warm up" the place (just an idea, un-vetted idea). Make the grounds as well as the building attractive. Use green space.
- Bike parking, better signage

6. **Would it be important for you to have the ability to pay bills in a drive-through window?**

24 Yes

51 No

10 No Answer

- E-bills/payments are coming, even to the city within 5-10 years. You don't need this in a 100 year Building
- Elevator & signage
- We pay online
- I pay bills online. Also I do not think we need to cater to calves and do all we can to promote healthy transportation like walking more.
- Not significantly important to me personally, but would be a convenience for others
- A drop box is sufficient
- I live close enough to walk
- I walk but others may appreciate this option
- It would be nice but not a major determinant
- Just because I work in the building so I walk payments to the Treasurer. If I was not currently working in the building it would be important to me
- No- bcz I believe online makes drive-thru unnecessary/irrelevant in future
- If I pay a bill, I drive-up mailbox or slot (like HEC) is sufficient
- This seems an aesthetic disaster for downtown
- On-line!
- I live downtown and walk when necessary to conduct business downtown
- We pay online
- Pay online now! Like personal contact if I do need to go in 😊
- Does not matter-I pay my bill now by walking into the building
- Not now but perhaps in the future as age or infirm and new convenience
- There is often a line of some sort, and I prefer not to sit & wait in a car (it's bad for gas). And I don't want checks or money to be at risk of being dropped or lost.
- I think that a drive through window would be great for the elderly and the disabled that still drive. The staff in the treasurer's office have to go outside to retrieve payments from a drop box in an unsecured location; If an escort is needed to take all collections to the bank, then they should not have to go out alone to retrieve payments from an unsecured location.
- Seems like an antiquated concern in an age of internet online payments and other means such USPS.
- As the city considers their new City Hall to be oriented to technological advances (currently and soon-to-be available) it would seem unnecessary to make in-person bill paying a priority. That said, I am unfamiliar with the numbers of local citizens who use/need such services at this time.
- Downtown residents don't need drive-throughs, but others might.
- put a drop box by parking... the idea is to be sustainable and you don't need drive thru' for that.
- I currently don't have to pay any bills at the Municipal building. However, I assume it would be more convenient for residents who do.
- I pay bills through automatic withdrawals.
- I would not say important, but if it is cost effective out certainly would be convenient and perhaps would reduce wait time inside.
- However, we do need good handicap parking and handicap access to our new City Hall.

- not likely to be efficient/cost effective
- I use the U S postal service or visit in person.
- The ease of mail and online payments make it not necessary to take away of the quality of the building.
- Not important but would be a nice addition
- Use HEC's drive in for convenience.
- There are so many ways to pay now. Drive-through window is a product of the 1970's.
- Absolutely not. Why wait in a car line - wasting gas and polluting the air?
- would prefer online payment options
- Not applicable. I support the locality by spending money at city businesses.
- Is faster, more convenient, do not have to stop car and walk; also more convenient for city depts delivering to the building
- Getting in and out of vehicles can be very cumbersome for individuals with physical limitations
- Treasurer's office would benefit from this, but not sure if residents would prefer either way.
- I don't often pay bills in person to the city
- Almost all of my city bills are done electronically.
- mail and electronic are fine
- I don't mind getting out of my car
- We pay online or by mailed check.
- I like the creative thinking here, but personally I would not need it or use it.
- Would be helpful, I use the current drop box

## 7. Is it important to you to maximize green space at this site?

52 Yes

20 No

13 No Answer

- The municipal building site selector, design & development should be considered as part of a master site development plan
- Again, it's a tradeoff between cost, convenience, accessibility, etc.
- Green space is not as important as staying away all together from the historic buildings
- Green space provides space for many different community activities and is open to all-not enough downtown
- Important to overall health of the community to encourage or greenspace, walking, biking
- Easy access means more to me
- But not at the expense of adequate parking and efficient traffic flow
- Green space is important to healthy communities and provides significant ecosystem services/expand where possible
- New parking should utilize urban BMP's for reducing impervious surfaces and minimizing runoff. In addition maintaining or adding greenspace would help
- Somewhat for appeal but parking more important
- The City has plenty of Parks
- Since the space is where the Farmers mkt where many events are centered-green space is key
- A thoughtful placement of landscaping/trees/grass can create the appearance of more green space than is actually there. Lets provide enough parking for employees and users on site
- Green space and integration into the current and future park can make this building a key part of the community
- More important to just maximize space in general
- Building should "fit" the present feel of "entering downtown"
- H'burg needs more green space. Are there plans for more parks in town
- I understand the park area behind the building will be expanded. The Farmer's Market is also important and green areas inviting to all
- Park design and implementation at this location would maximize green space for general use
- This is always important
- Green is nice, but not necessary, for running the city. Green spaces are very good for clearing the mind before, during, or after hard day's work, but,in my opinion, we have to fit the people and facilities in first before we fit in the wonderful green.
- Important to maximize it in terms of using it as a buffer for parking lots . . . but a well chosen site in relation to a public park and a site that does not adversely impact the historic character of the downtown historic district will balance green space anyway as part of design.
- Given that there have been/are additional plans for use of space behind the proposed building sites, for purposes of community entertainment/meeting and social activities, I would imagine that decreasing the green space would make less feasible those other plans/activities.
- More green space = bigger/better park. Parking issues can be resolved with construction of new deck. Sacrificing green for parking is senseless. Staff would be better served by short daily walk rather than parking at the door. For instance, school employees survive parking in Wolfe Street deck. Historic downtowns traditionally do not offer on-site parking for everyone. Have you consulted the green space experts. i.e. park planners? If not, why not?
- I think it would just add to the image of the city hall. It definitely won't hurt to have more green space.
- It's important to have SOME green space, but it's also important to have plenty of parking.

- There is quite a bit of green space downtown already; of course it would be nice to have more, but not if it drives up the total cost.
- Having an efficient and easily flow to public services is more important. There are plenty of other green spaces within Harrisonburg. However, a new building should not be built in the existing flood plain.
- Green space is inviting...but do NOT block the MUNICIPAL building from main st.
- I am completely supportive of the POP park which would maximize green space in the area. I question the need for 80+ parking spaces at the new City Hall. Although that is comparable to what we have now, all that is needed is handicap parking, and parking for those city employees whose job takes them in and out of the office all day. The rest of us can walk a block (or two) from a parking deck.
- maximizing green space not as critical/important to me as aesthetic appeal and blending into "downtown" look and feel
- it is difficult to park downtown so maximize parking
- Adds to the beauty of downtown.
- Green space is shrinking everywhere, so it is important to have a place of respite in the downtown area.
- Green s space is good!
- We need plenty of parking for City services and for downtown businesses
- This is the Heart of Harrisonburg. It should be a community space for all ages and people.
- Usable green space is good but not necessarily a muddy field. Greenery around the perimeter of parking lots is very attractive. Perhaps a small area on Main St with a few benches and trees for walkers to sit and relax. A pretty fountain would be excellent!
- A balance is in order to accommodate all that is needed, but definitely green space on the Main St. side with parking in the rear.
- good, but not critical to maximize - appearance could be achieved with professional landscaping
- The area west of the present municipal building (Turner Pavilion) should be preserved/ enhanced as open space. Equally important, view of historic buildings from S. Main should not be obstructed.
- It is important to keep it as much green as possible
- I think it is nice to have green space. We are a rural, mountainous area.
- Some would be nice, but it is not a high importance.
- Preserving the historic integrity of the existing Municipal Building for future generations and tourism is more important
- I like the effort we have been taking as a city to utilize green space in our work to improve the city.
- For the long-term aesthetic benefit of the community, the site should be planned to make green space around it "useable" not old-fashioned foundation landscaping/planting, but walkways and seating areas where citizens can enjoy the space. The building should appear inviting to citizens, with appropriately scaled walkways, bicycle parking, covered stroller parking, and inviting entrances. Automobile parking should be carefully considered so parking lots do not define the look of the site - especially from Main Street, and the adjacent park space.
- Neutral to somewhat important.
- Yes. Also, I think the big tree that is behind Community Development needs to be saved.
- urban setting
- We need only to drive to the mall area to see what a lack of green space looks like. Downtown should distinguish itself from the rest of the city by creating inviting, beautiful spaces. The Main Street corridor is very beautiful. Demolishing

the community development building and moving parking out back would do a lot to enhance the beauty of downtown.

- I still hope that the Plan our Park movement can be implemented. The downtown is becoming so much more attractive from a quality of life standpoint that my wife and I have considered moving there once the kids graduate. Green space is a very attractive feature and should not be overlooked
- Well, I say maximize green space, but it's not the item that must be done at all cost. It needs to be factored into a pleasing site, ease of use, good view of Farmer's Market from Main St., etc.
- For reasons of long-term beauty for future generations, the way that European cities are kept lovely over hundreds of years...
- City Hall is a center of a community. Green space and commitment to sound and sustainable design principles create a potentially profound impression. A beautiful space is something the community can be proud of, and want to utilize (beyond when it's time to pay a bill or fine).
- Green space is essential to all animals health, including humans.
- So some plan for parking is needed. The city has been a leader in parks and open spaces since the 1950's besides the environmental benefits, people like to be in green spaces; community festivals etc.

8. Is it important to you that the Farmers Market be visible from Main Street?

25 Yes

50 No

10 No Answer

- Doesn't matter
- Sight line isn't important. It's developed spectacularly without the visibility
- It would be nice but not necessary
- Making the farmer's market a significant issue would be letting the tail wag the dog
- Although I do not have a traffic study all eastbound, westbound, southbound and most northbound travelers on I81 will be first coming down Liberty. Liberty is the most important street for people who do not know where they are going
- Encourages community engagement
- Fronts Liberty St.
- Both as a sales tool for the market and as a public connection-cars to walkers to vendors
- It is a jewel for our downtown and should be visible and accessible from main street
- Access from Main should be as simple as possible
- I already know where it is, so it isn't important to me. Maybe to a visitor
- It is not presently and is well known and utilized
- I think more traffic travels on Main Street so it would help attract more customers
- Not necessary
- The primary entrance& exit is South Liberty Street. Also, signage points the location of the Turner Pavilion
- Users know where it is
- Good signage, expansion, and park expansion alleviate this issue
- It would be a bonus but not necessary
- A nice sign would be sufficient
- Clear signage and directions
- That will be a pleasant site and help with activities planned for the park
- A sign pointing from Main street is fine.
- It is already not too easy to see the farmer's market from Main St., and they are doing well. It would be GREAT if we could KEEP A PASSAGE from Main St. to the Farmer's market, but I'm fine with a big sign being placed outside of the Municipal building parking lot and letting people drive through.
- Downtown and its history attract tourists from all parts of the world, and they seek out to find all that the city has to offer.
- It's important for the FM to be visible from Liberty Street .
- First, the Farmer's Market is slightly below grade (from Main St.) and though I do not have statistics to support my impression, I imagine that most participants of the Farmer's Market do not come to know of its presence because they've seen it from Main Street. The Farmer's Market comes to the awareness of this community (and others nearby) because of its essential attractiveness as a community hub of sustainable (and forward-thinking) culture.
- Urban planning would consider all visibility issues and needs/concerns of all stakeholders.
- I don't consider the Farmer's Market to be very visible from Main Street as is. If there was a posting at Main Street showing that the Farmer's Market was in the rear, that would be acceptable.
- I personally don't shop at the Farmers Market, but I think that it's likely something people \*plan\* to go to, rather than stopping just because they happen to drive by and see it.

- People can follow signs to get there. It's not really that aesthetically pleasing to see from the road.
- Most of the public already identifies with the Farmers Market off Liberty Street. Additional directional signage would address this if determined necessary.
- It's visible from liberty st. Also a sign put on Main st directing to the farmers market will work.
- Being able to see the Farmers Market from Main Street is not at all important. It should not be a consideration.
- it's important to keep access from Main street and signage but visibility from main street - NO - that being said - I don't want to see a "monstrosity" of a bldg go up there
- does not matter to me
- Not really. Plan six offers a view. Most people using the market are local and know where it is and how to access.
- Visibility is not as important as access, as long as there is a sign that help guides visitors to the market.
- Farmers Market is/has become an important community experience but good signage is more important than visibility.
- I know where it is
- doesn't matter to me
- I think it is a consideration so I did not know how to answer this in an absolute manner. This is one consideration.
- A better sign, sure. But no need to see the structure.
- It would be a nice perk, but the Farmers' Market has grown enough in reputation that visitors, and I believe tourists, will continue to seek it out from Liberty Street.
- Already so well established it doesn't need to be seen as long as parking for it can be accessed from both Main St. and Liberty St.
- Since primary access to & visibility of the market is from Liberty St, this seems to have little impact compared to other street-scape features.
- Not necessary but it would be nice
- Farmers' markets are an attraction that draw people
- It is a great asset for the city and surrounding areas, and draws in consumers - it ought to be easy to find
- Honestly, it is not that attractive looking, it is very basic. I like that they put up signs saying where to go on the days of the Farmers Market. I think that is enough.
- I don't know how much of an impact impulse shoppers would have on the business at the Farmer's Market.
- The Farmer's Market has a strong presence. As Liberty Street is further improved with new development, in the long run visibility from Main Street is not critical to such an attraction. Making sure that the rear of the Municipal building and any related parking lots are attractive or bounded by landscaping is much more important to the feel of the Farmer's Market.
- They built in the back.
- There is nothing inherently beautiful about the Farmer's Market. It is neat, but not important to see from Main Street.
- I have not thought about this before, but I would say yes. The farmers market is a reminder of some of the nice aspects of Harrisonburg. seeing a gathering of people anywhere brings attention to it.
- This is of some interest, but it is not an overriding consideration. I can think of many cities where the farmers market is not readily visible from Main St. (such as Lancaster, Pa.), but still gets lots of visitors.
- I hadn't thought about this until now, and think that it would be a lovely addition both for the farmers, for visitors, and for our community. Again, the farmers market is one of the gems of Harrisonburg, a gathering place, and it would be lovely to be able to see this from Main Street as folks pass by. Could create more traffic for our small farmers and merchants.

- It is important for people who may not know where the market is, including tourist, to have the best visibility to the market.

**9. Do you like the idea of a community atrium space that features the south side of the existing Municipal Building?**

33 Yes

31 No

21 No Answer

- I don't want the south side of the municipal bldg covered up
- I do- I've had very positive experiences with atriums in public spaces
- We should not crowd the historic building by putting an atrium up against it. The historic building should be free and clear on all sides.
- This means altering the historic Municipal Building. Also, I do not think the city will commit to have it open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is not a true public space.
- Adds character
- Not if it is the elevation shown on the final panel
- The 1908 structure should be restored and maintained as a historic structure that is important to the city's heritage and identity. It should not be altered with an atrium of connected to a new structure.
- I like the idea but it would not see much use and is not my top design. Really depends future use of existing building
- I don't have a strong opinion about that.
- If the atrium is all glass it presents too modern a front
- I love this idea for preservation.
- This is a great idea. Any way to emphasize the subtle wall would be great.
- Do not demolish the existing building H'burg has lots too many history building
- Design #6 would suggest that front of bldg. have columns that go top to bottom – just like current bldg. More cohesive design and better presentation. Also helps with water issue in basement, I understand.
- Smoke screen to promote earlier inappropriate design.
- The new building will be smashed up beside the Muni building which is a disaster, so this atrium is insignificant. There are established guidelines being ignored.
- If it fits with all other considerations.
- A nice "open space" that is not freezing in winter & not sweltering in summer sounds like a nice place to take a break, or even to meet up with people. The light & view in the windows on the sides of the buildings connected to the atrium will be less good and less pretty than an open, unenclosed view, but still much better than no windows at all. Also, this allows people to see the cool-looking, historical portions of the old Municipal Building.
- It seems to me a pretty idea idea on paper . . . reminds me of the 6th Street Market Place in Richmond in the 1980s, which was torn down 20 years later. The space won't be good for music as the acoustics would be horrible. It seems an unnecessary expense and a poor idea to justify building next to the historic building.

- Aesthetically an atrium has appeal for pedestrians and those persons working in those buildings. I imagine that there is some significant, additional costs involved in its creation. I do not know whether there would be ongoing (maintenance) costs as well.
- Anywhere but there. Atrium is OK, but should not compromise view of existing building. Park view would be preferable. Preservation standards preclude current proposal.
- dead space and too much glass. Perhaps if it was a reservable event space of some sort... then maybe
- I think this would be wonderful for citizens that want to stop in to eat their lunch, have coffee, read a book, or hold a meeting. It's a great idea.
- I believe an atrium space on the north side of City Hall to connect a new municipal building would function just as well.
- As long as its inclusion does not obscure the muni building
- Any attachment to the south side of the Municipal Building is undesirable. We do not need an atrium in order to teach students about our historic buildings.
- I'd have to hear more about that - who would utilize a community atrium space and for what? I'd like to see existing Municipal Building remain intact and in use for something
- It does not matter to me
- RELaxing, beautiful green space is always a plus
- Not necessary
- does not matter to me
- Does not matter
- Again an absolute with little reference. It all depends is the answer.
- Not horrible, but not necessary.
- Still think the beautiful old historic building will be too overshadowed by the addition
- not sure which plan you are referring to - would prefer new building to south.
- Benefits of the atrium are outweighed by the negative impact of obscuring sight of the historic architecture of the municipal bldg.
- Absolutely love the atrium, more beautiful
- The atrium is a nice idea by itself with or without the Muni Bldg
- Just seems nice
- Indifferent on this. I guess I don't view it as a must-have at the moment.
- The south side of the existing building is absolutely nothing special. Nothing about it says "City Hall".
- Not sure what this means.
- I don't know what this means.
- Do not change the old Main Street School, please. So many private landmarks are gone forever. Don't let the city be responsible for changing one of the nicest downtown building next to the court house.
- It is a win-win-win solution. Least cost, most green space, preserve the past, create great public space.
- Our preference is for Site #4 or Site #6, for reasons of overall attractiveness.
- This is a very old and historic building. Will this atrium keep that open or hide it?
- I'm not sure what this means. A photo would help.
- Don't cover up the beautiful blue stone. That would be such a mistake.

**10. Please provide any additional information which you feel would assist in the completion of this project.**

- I would like the columns from the existing building to be carried over to the new building. Lindsay's, the bank, and properties across the street have columns. This keep the charm of downtown, rather than looking like the suburbs.
- Get stakeholders involved. There's a lot swirling around under the radar about this-open the process up. You'll get a better building, a better site a better community as a result.
- I am glad the city is working to preserve the facade of the 1906(?) building.
- The Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources should be asked to comment on site selection. The Planning Commission should be asked to advise.
- This survey should ask people which site they prefer – I prefer site #4 by a wide margin.
- Would encourage maintaining the East House for a significant purpose. That enhances the well being of the community.
- I believe site #2 would be the best location for the new building.
- I prefer site #1. Don't want to see existing municipal building obscured
- The building design in all 6 options are too large and out of scale with the location. It is not a welcoming addition to downtown. The Municipal Building and the other structures in the vicinity owned by the city should be restored and used as offices/meeting spaces. If a new structure is needed, it should be much smaller and more efficiently designed.
- It is worrisome that with no plans for the future use of the existing building we are going to build such a large structure.
- Energy efficient should be considered. Solar or "earth furnace" can also be considered but should not drive costs way up.
- I like option #6 best, with #2 my second choice. Important to align Campbell St. to entrances.
- Would like #6 or other options to take current front of "old high school" and replicate that on new building rather creating all new architectural fronts – just create the piers and columns.
- Like site 6 best
- The project is long overdue, as I think many will attest to.
- Please use the asset of Plan our Park for site design and park integration. This is a huge chance for public/private partnerships.
- #6 is my choice
- My favorite is #6 reasons being increased green space, orientation to Main Street traveling north, least expensive, preservation of Old School board building.
- Prefer #5 or #6
- Most important, #6 will allow current employees to remain where they are and save \$\$.
- The new city Hall should be a stand-alone 21<sup>st</sup> Century office building that does not attempt to mimic old architecture. Council needs to plan for the long term interest in historic sites which make us unique and show that our citizens care! We want to be proud of our City.
- Also, consider a new Framers Market structure. A metal and glass roof, well designed, would fit so much better. The present one is too narrow and is not appealing.
- 1) I prefer plan #6, but plan #5 is a close second. 2) I don't like the disappearance of Warren St. :^( So I have a hard time supporting any design that removes it. If Warren St. is removed, I'll probably just end up cutting through the parking lot to get between Main & Liberty streets. If that is undesired behavior, then please consider providing a more street-like path for such traffic, as there is a definite \*need\* for such a connecting road there. 3) Between when I first arrived at this page (<http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/new-city-hall>), and when I finished the last question &

submitted the survey, having looked at all the sites & coming up with my top choices in between, approximately 90 minutes elapsed. Just FYI. ;^)

- Focus on the citizens of this city and what's going to work for them. The staff must be provided with proper work space and environment that provides comfort, support, and efficiency.
- My preference is for site #2 or #4. I think site #4 will ultimately still preserve the visual gateway into the district by moving building a presented in the original proposal away from the historic MB. I also like option #5 but for the parking in front. Better to have green space in front.
- Given the six proposed plans, I support Site #6 as it presents the best, most forward-thinking, green-oriented options. I like that the new and older buildings have a linkage (via the atrium, as shown) and there is a symmetry in that design as well. Curvilinear parking areas and the site description enumerate the evident benefits of the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to this project.
- I request that the new structure not interfere either visually or structurally with viewshed of historic buildings, and that there be no Main Street parking. That pristine section of Main Street would be reduced by a parking lot. Wish this effort could have been interactive. Info should have been collected before general location was chosen. All city property should be vetted as possible sites. And why do we have a Planning Commission? Are we not worthy of urban planning? If we borrow Council chambers from county, how much space do we really need to rent? A generational building trumps temporary expense and inconvenience of staff relocation. If our needs double in ten/twenty years, don't we need to consider a taller building now? And how would that impact the historic structures? Once a location is chosen, will there be an opportunity to effect design? Remember, first do no harm!
- I believe that preserving the historical integrity of the town architecture is a sustainable idea. I'm tired of the wreckage, and destruction of supposed modernity.
- I definitely prefer site plan number 6. I think with the direction the building faces it would be fantastic to approach on Main Street. And, plan number 5 would be my second choice.
- I like Site 1 or 2 best because the buildings adjoin, and the view of the old building isn't blocked
- Think site # 3 offers a functional site arrangement. The old house that the School Board abandoned should be demolished making way for a new community services building that fronts from the west (parking off Liberty Street).
- Frankly, I think NOT allowing us to CHOOSE a site plan from above is BIASED. Why is there NOT a question that says "Should we choose a site plan that does not BLOCK the view of the existing municipal building?" That would have been clearer. That said Site #4 is my pick.
- Most importantly, please do not locate the new City Hall on site #6. Please consider site #4.
- As stated - I think City Hall should sit on Main Street and blend/enhance downtown. Parking should be in the back not out front - pedestrian approach should be encouraged/provided for
- I like option #6 best of those proposed.
- Glad to see that it is being planned. Most other city departments are in new facilities, This project is much needed, A city is judged by its government offices and their location. In many cases new residents are introduced to the city at this location. A good first impression is necessary.
- I am concerned that the location will impinge upon the existing Farmer's Market and plans for an expanded community space for concerts etc. Site #6 seems to be the best option.
- I would encourage location #4 to maintain the visibility of the current building rather than locating the proposed addition as an attachment.
- I like the following option the best: site #4
- More stalls in the ladies rooms than men's, like Main Street entrance
- I like Site #6 the best. I like Main St entrance vs Liberty St for City Hall

- There is no need to fast track this process. Please take the time and use the resources available. Yes, there are extreme views hence perhaps an outside expert may be in order.
- You didn't ask about which of the six options people like, don't you care? So here are mine. Definitely NOT #4. Not #2 or #6 either. #1 is okay. My favorite is #3 -- this is an office building not a monument! My second favorite is #5.
- Please don't tear down the Eastham House! Harrisonburg has already lost so much of its town identity by not preserving or honoring its historical buildings. Plan #6 is the clear frontrunner in terms of space usage and design.
- It makes sense for the buildings to be connected in some way. Access to the city council chambers needs to be on the first floor if possible.
- I want to thank you for considering options and seeking public input.
- Plan #5, with the new City Hall south of the Municipal building & set back so that both can be seen is my preference.
- As a citizen of Rockingham County I identify myself as 'from Harrisonburg' and support the businesses and, indirectly, the city government. I have long been concerned about the lack of significant conservation of historic resources in Harrisonburg as compared with neighboring localities such as Staunton. Siting this new construction offers an opportunity for city gov't to improve that record by preserving the visual impact of historic structures in the design process.
- No to #6!!!!
- Just go with number 6 it is the best most beautiful option
- Prefer Site & Design #6
- The visible imposing view of the new bldg. that Site #6 creates is my choice.
- ADA guidelines are minimum requirements, please think critically about the use of the facility for all individuals by incorporating elements of universal design, so that the building will be accessible to all residents.
- What happens in regards to the "city Park"? Is the money spent on the project wasted if a city park is constructed in the existing parking lot?? I would hate to have my tax payer money wasted if a park were constructed later. We will be spending enough on this project and the new school the city also has to fund.
- Personal preference on the dome - it reminds me of Charlottesville or it just has a feel of a different city entirely. I care more about the square footage but the design throws me off, could be that the pictures don't do it justice. I know it's supposed to reflect the Spring House but you wouldn't know that unless someone told you. There aren't really any other domes in Harrisonburg...
- Primary is the preservation of the city's historic structures, such as the Municipal Building. The new city hall should be separate and to the south of this structure, set back to allow full view of it as a historic monument as one enters downtown from the south. My site preference is #5.
- I really like the layout for Site #6 and think that would be the best layout for providing services to the people in the city.
- My husband and I, taxpayers in the city, both agree with Mr Stoltzfus as follows: I think the strongest location would be the one south of the historic Muni Building, separated from it by 80 to 100 feet, with a landscaped plaza along Main Street. If the building were set back about the same distance from Main Street as the current Muni Building, it would leave the historic buildings plenty visible as you come around the Main Street curve. This scheme would maintain the current strong character of those blocks of South Main Street, with large gracious lawns, tall trees and the prominent buildings set back. The south location with a landscaped plaza is a good choice. If some money must be spent to relocate staff during construction, that is a small price to pay for keeping the long term integrity of our historic buildings.

- Plan #6 absolutely makes the most sense for all of the bullet points on the explanations. It creates an identity for "City Hall" that we lack now and can integrate well with the existing building while leaving room for expansion in the future. All of the other options are just building a building for the sake of making more space.
- Site plan #6 seems to be the best aesthetically. It would also prevent relocating staff (cost).
- Mathers is doing a good job listening to the City's requests. POP may not ever happen.
- Plan #4 is the obvious choice. My only caveat would be that I would include a walkway and biking path from Main Street through to Turner Pavilion running between the old Municipal Building and the new building. People are going to cut through there with or without a path and we should make it safe.
- As the down town becomes more popular, it will become more tighter as future public and private projects are added. I think it is important to maximize space now so that as many options can be considered. This is certainly an important and needed building, but won't necessarily add to the quality of life for people who visit the downtown or live there. I think there are some eventual needs in the downtown and I would hate to see them discarded due to lack of space.
- My first job was in the basement of Main Street School and as secretary of Main Street School. It is important to our history of education in the city.
- We should not let a small, vocal group of extreme preservations steer the project and cost us, the taxpayers, 100s of thousands of dollars of extra expense
- I think it would be good to have a clear main entrance from Main St., since if the main entrance was from Liberty, it would be too far from Liberty to be clear as the main entrance. I prefer option 6.
- Maintaining the visibility of the current historic facade, while making the new building equally attractive with a clear and welcoming pedestrian entrance (and an architectural design that harmonizes with the existing building), PLUS tucking away the parking areas to be as unobtrusive as possible (i.e., not right on Main St.)... all of these are steps that we think will contribute to the lasting beauty of downtown Harrisonburg.
- Please don't hide or destroy any more of our historic buildings. Highlight what we have... think of the gash in our downtown that loss of the Virginia Theater caused. Let's be creative and find a way to highlight this.
- I like best the option Site #4. I received helpful information from the POP team, and although I have not had time to more carefully consider the exact location, I am in relative agreement with these comments: "I think the strongest location would be the one south of the historic Muni Building, separated from it by 80 to 100 feet, with a landscaped plaza along Main Street. If the building were set back about the same distance from Main Street as the current Muni Building, it would leave the historic buildings plenty visible as you come around the Main Street curve. This scheme would maintain the current strong character of those blocks of South Main Street, with large gracious lawns, tall trees and the prominent buildings set back. The south location with a landscaped plaza is a good choice. If some money must be spent to relocate staff during construction, that is a small price to pay for keeping the long term integrity of our historic buildings."
- I only like site map 6. There is no reason to tear down or cover up historic buildings. We should all know that now (Kavanaugh, Virginia Theater). If you want to "respect the past" then don't raze it or cover it up!
- I would like to express my preference for Site Six, with the atrium option. This looks especially nice and would preserve the existing building. Please pass this on to the appropriate person. Thanks for your consideration.
- Should we be concerned about the potential of the Old School Board Building being taken over by the construction plans for City Hall? I know you all hosted the public forum last night and two of the site plans include this proposition. Does this effect the current RFP request for Eastham? I'd also like to mention that taking over the Eastham House does not "respect the past" as the cover of the New City Hall brochure indicates.
- The new city hall should stand-alone 21<sup>st</sup> century office building that should not attempt to mimic old architecture. Council needs to plan for long term interest in historic sites which make us unique and show our citizens we care. We want to be proud of our city

- We have reviewed several of the proposals for the building and our main concern is maintaining the historical integrity of the current municipal building as well as not changing our current view from the Joshua Wilton House. We firmly oppose any plans that erect a three-story building directly across the street from our business and anything that compromises the historical significance of the current municipal building.

## COMMENTS ON CITY HALL LOCATION & DESIGN

James Orndoff  
2 North Main Street, Harrisonburg  
October 16, 2013

I am generally opposed to the location of any new governmental construction on the current city property, preferring instead that alternative locations be selected that do not adversely impact the design of a proposed downtown city park on that property. Such locations could include an office tower, with parking beneath, immediately behind the Public Safety Building; repurchase and expansion of the previous police department building currently occupied by Rosetta Stone; or purchase of land on the current Roses site. However, as I am aware that the purpose of today's public input session is to gather reaction to the limited number of locations proposed by Mather Architects, I will limit the remainder of my comments to that purpose.

Under no circumstances should either of the options adjacent to the south elevation of the current Municipal Building, either touching those structures or placed sixteen feet away, be considered. Both are violations of the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as to placement, height, materials and design. I would consider both of these options as violations of Mr. Mather's professional ethics. The locations north of the current historical buildings and behind the Arts Council and Quilt Museum properties present their own unique challenges, such as limited Main Street visibility, traffic flow and encroachment on the Farmers Market pavilion.

The best of the proposed options are those on the southern edge of the municipal property, generally on the site of the Community Development Building. Because of the Main Street curve in that area, a building can be designed and sited that would not significantly interfere with the view of the southern elevation of the historical buildings, provided that it is a radical departure from the current design being proposed by Mr. Mather for all of the proposed locations. I have attempted to create sketches of such a design, copies of which are attached. Please note the large one-story eastern elevation containing a lobby and council chamber and the smaller two-story western elevation built to take advantage of the slope of the site and possibly provide support areas for both the Farmers Market and a future park. Both of these wings should have roof decks accessible from both inside and outside to provide exterior space which could be enjoyed by both City staff and market/park visitors. A four-story central tower would provide space for City offices, both now and into the future. The eastern front should have significant setback not only to avoid interference with the view of the historic structures but also to provide a gracious pedestrian plaza. Public parking should be limited to the north and western sides, with employee parking on the upper level of the Water Street parking deck.

This option pre-supposes the prior demolition of the Community Development Building, which creates some indigestion for the City due to the relocation of staff during construction. However, the space required for such location need not be the amount taken up by the Community Development Building, as arrangements have already been made for temporary City Council chambers and City staff can be housed in significantly smaller individual office cubicles in another location, either mobile units or leased space elsewhere in the downtown. The costs

Orndoff, page 2:

associated with staff relocation can be offset by savings in demolition and construction based on information supplied by Eugene Buie in his earlier email to City Council and the City Manager, a copy of which is attached. The southern option, with prior demolition of the Community Development Building also preserves the use of the "grassy area" used by various community groups for fund-raising activities, as well as by the Farmers Market and local festivals, all of which provide an economic benefit to the City.

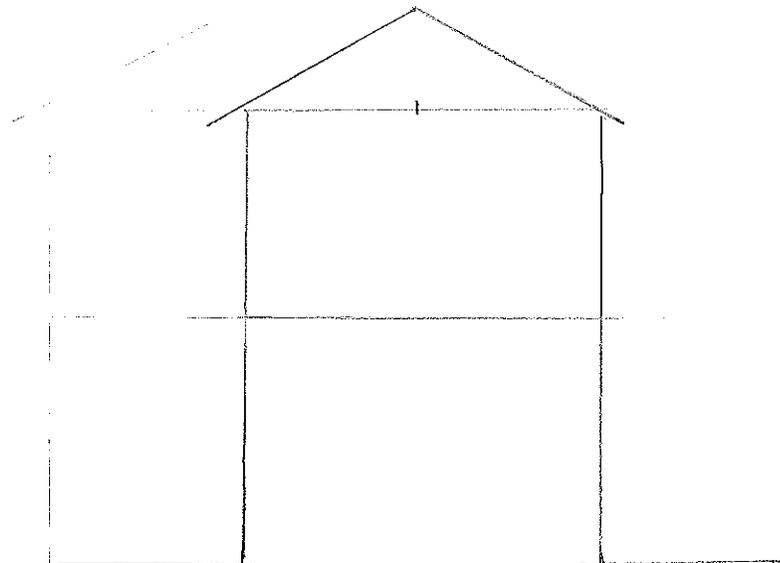
I urge City Council to select the southern option for the placement of a new City Hall, unless they are willing to explore some of the other locations listed in my opening paragraph.

Attachments:

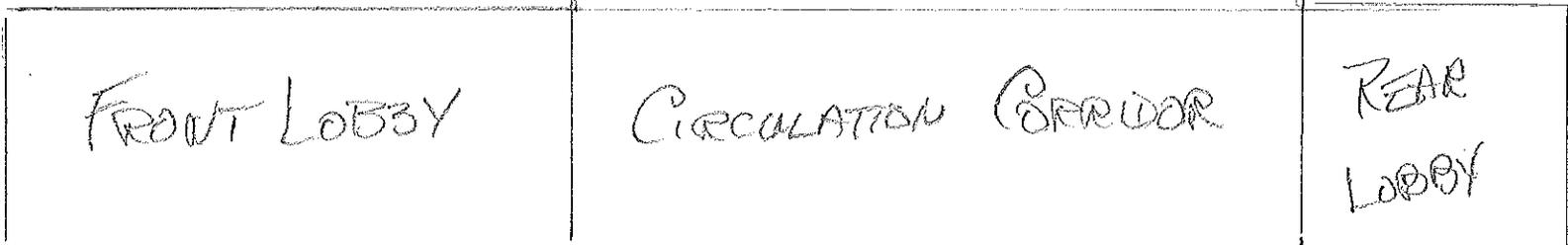
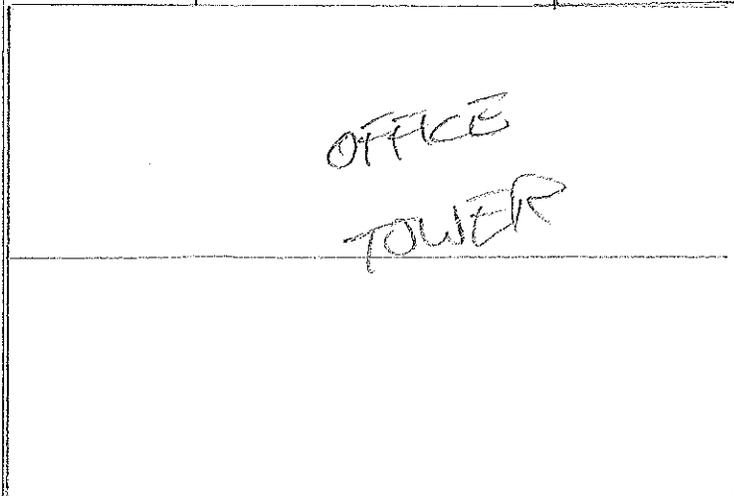
- Building design sketches (north elevation and site plan)
- Construction cost analysis (Eugene Buie)

NORTHERN  
ELEVATION

E ← → W



NOT  
TO  
SCALE



# SITE PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

Front  
Lobby  
Council Chamber

Office  
Tower

Rear  
Lobby

Circulation Corridor



# Construction Cost Analysis (Eugene Bure)

Everyone....

Below is the text of an email sent to Council this morning. As you will read, I have considered Diane's revelation to me regarding the greenspace and have not altered my opinion. While I agree with Jim and others on the matter of process and Council's apparent mishandling thereof, especially where POP and Planning Commission are concerned, I think the immediate matter at hand is the active proposals by Mather and Council's obvious intent to press ahead. For that reason, it seems important to attempt a settlement on the location of the new city office building....thus, the following email to Council.

"Please allow me to offer for Council's consideration the following comments regarding current architectural and engineering studies ordered by Council for a proposed municipal office building. As I understand the present situation since September 24th, Council will be considering two site options.

"Option 1 is generally described as the original preliminary proposal by Mather Architects to construct a new city office building adjacent to and connected by an atrium to the present Municipal Building. Due to site restrictions created by the immediate proximity of the Municipal Building and the Community Development Building to the construction site, the open greenspace south of the Turner Pavilion has been proposed for a construction staging area. City staff currently occupying the Community Development Building would remain at that location until construction of the new office building is completed. After the new office building is ready for occupancy, city staff and records would be relocated to the new office building. The Community Development Building would then be demolished and replaced with paved parking and landscaping.

"Option 2 presently under study by Mather Architects would propose razing the Community Development Building and constructing a new office building on the site now occupied by the Community Development Building. The city staff and records now in the Community Development Building would be relocated prior to beginning demolition. When construction of the new office building, paved parking, and landscaping are completed, employees and records would be relocated again to the new building.

"While it has been almost thirty years since working as a general contractor and land developer, I still have a sense of the critical path a construction project must follow from start to finish and, from that experience, draw the following relevant conclusions:

- (a) Option 2 could be completed for a lesser cost to the City and in less time than Option 1.
- (b) The savings realized by the City under Option 2 would more than justify the cost of initially relocating city employees and records to temporary locations prior to beginning demolition of the Community Development Building.
- (c) The concerns of local and state historians and preservationists would be reconciled if Council chooses Option 2.
- (d) Public concerns over damage to and temporary loss-of-use of the open greenspace south of the Turner Pavilion would be resolved by choosing Option 2, since this greenspace would not be used for staging or any other purpose associated with this project.

"The reasoning behind these conclusions may be summarized as follows:

"Regarding Option 1:

"(a) Due to the immediate proximity of adjacent buildings to the construction site, a general contractor and subcontractors will encounter inconveniences that will slow work within a site confined between two existing buildings, both of which will be occupied during construction by staff and used by the public. This reduction in efficiencies will result in higher construction costs charged to the city.

"(b) Safety considerations will require that security fencing be erected around the entire construction site, including portions of the existing buildings as well as the remote tract of greenspace south of the Turner Pavilion proposed for necessary construction staging. This greenspace will not be available for community activities and events until construction is completed and the greenspace restored.

"(c) As the only staging area available for construction operations, this greenspace will be used for the storage of materials, construction and engineering offices, employee parking, equipment parking and servicing, etc. The remote nature of this staging space will require transferring materials to the construction site, resulting in increased costs for employee and equipment hours during a construction period estimated to be about two years.

"(d) Construction of the new office building must be completed and the building ready for occupancy before the city staff and records may be relocated and the Community Development Building demolished. After construction is completed and city staff relocated to the new office building, security fencing erected around the office building and staging sites must be removed and repositioned around the demolition site. The general contractor or possibly another contractor hired by the City must bring in heavy equipment for the sole purpose of demolishing and removing the debris again at an additional cost to the city.

"(e) After demolition of the Community Development Building is complete and the site cleared, paved parking and landscaping may then be completed and the new office building opened to the public.

"(f) The greenspace previously used for staging must be cleared and restored before it can be made available again for public use.

"Regarding Option 2, compare the above with the following:

"(a) After city staff and records are relocated and the Community Development Building vacated, demolition and the construction of the new city office building could proceed consecutively with a single general contractor. The heavy equipment used for demolition would be used also to prepare the site and foundation for the new office building.

"(b) Security fencing would be erected once around the perimeter of the construction site without involving either the Municipal Building or the greenspace south of the Turner Pavilion.

"(c) Construction could proceed efficiently within a secured perimeter with no risk to the public or city employees. There would be ample space within the secured construction site for operating and parking equipment, a construction office, subcontractor parking, material storage, etc. Movement around the building would be unobstructed by adjacent structures and materials would be easily available on site without being transported from a remote location.

"(d) When construction is completed, paved parking and landscaping would be completed and security fencing removed, allowing easy access without further delays for the relocation of city staff and records and the general public.

"For these reasons and probably others, I would urge Council to favorably consider instructing the City's architect to proceed with plans for the construction of the new office building on the site of the existing Community Development Building.

"Respectfully,

"Gene"