

To the Hingham Community,

Newsletter 9 | February 4 2026

## Project Update: Why This Project Matters

The proposed Center for Active Living at Bare Cove Park Drive is the result of several years of documented study, public input, and feasibility analysis. This update summarizes why the project exists, the conditions at the current facility, and why timing and decision-making matter.

### This Project Exists Because of Long-Standing, Documented Needs

The need for a new or significantly improved Center for Active Living did not emerge suddenly. It has been identified over multiple years through:

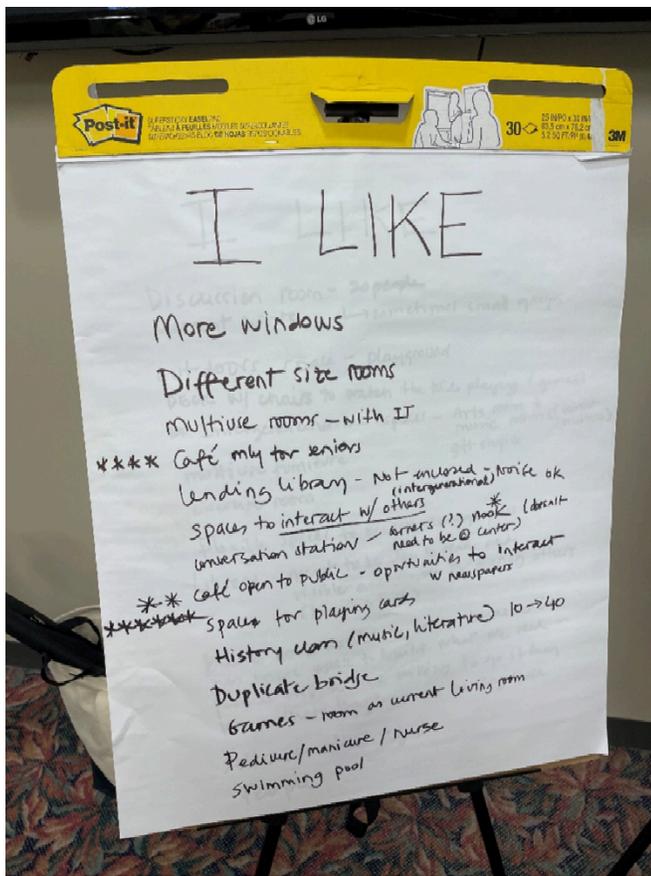
- Town-appointed Building Committee work
- Needs and gerontology assessments
- Staff interviews and operational reviews
- Public surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations

Beginning in 2020, the Building Committee was tasked with evaluating whether the existing Senior Center could continue to meet the needs of Hingham's older adults. Over time, this work showed that current space constraints, accessibility challenges, and operational limitations could not be resolved through minor adjustments alone. These findings were documented and discussed through public meetings and reports as the project evolved.

### **DID YOU KNOW...**

- This project has been studied since 2020.
- More than 225 residents participated in public outreach.
- Town Hall was not the only location studied, eight site options across Town Hall and Bare Cove Park Drive were formally evaluated before a final recommendation was made.
- Delaying action does not stop costs from rising. Construction costs, code requirements, and infrastructure risks increase over time, regardless of project timing.





Images from HCAL Public Outreach efforts in 2024 with Architects from edmSTUDIO

## Current Conditions at the Existing Center

The existing Center for Active Living operates in a space that was not designed to support the range or volume of programs now offered. While staff and volunteers work hard to maximize the facility's use, the building presents ongoing challenges, including:

- Insufficient space to run multiple programs at the same time
- Limited parking and difficult drop-off conditions
- Inadequate storage for equipment and supplies
- Small or undersized rooms that reach capacity quickly
- Accessibility limitations that affect participation

Public outreach conducted in 2024 confirmed that many residents attend despite these challenges, while others attend less frequently, or not at all, because of them. Parking, accessibility, and overcrowding were repeatedly cited as barriers.

## Current Limitations Are Structural, Not Cosmetic

The limitations of the existing Center are not related to finishes, furniture, or appearance. They are structural and systemic:

- The building footprint cannot accommodate needed program space
- Room sizes cannot be expanded without major reconstruction
- Parking capacity cannot be meaningfully increased on site
- Accessibility challenges are inherent to the layout and circulation

Feasibility studies examined whether renovation or expansion at Town Hall or other locations could resolve these issues. In each case, significant constraints remained, requiring reductions in programming,

reliance on remote parking, or compromised accessibility. These findings led to the conclusion that a purpose-built facility was necessary to meet documented needs.

## Deferred Decisions Increase Risk and Cost

As with all public facilities, delaying decisions does not pause aging infrastructure, rising construction costs, or evolving code requirements. Over time, deferral can lead to:

- Increased construction and material costs
- Greater risk of system failures or service disruptions
- Fewer viable options as conditions continue to change
- Continued strain on staff, volunteers, and users

The project has followed a phased process: conceptual planning, schematic design, and design development, with cost estimates refined at each step and reviewed publicly. This approach allows decisions to be made with clearer information, rather than reacting to urgent failures later.

## Looking Ahead

The Center for Active Living project reflects careful planning, public input, and years of evaluation. It is grounded in documented needs and focuses on delivering a facility that is accessible, functional, and adaptable for the long term.

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## Please Join the Conversation

The CAL project is the product of thoughtful community conversations and shared goals. As we move forward, your voice matters. We will be engaging you throughout the process and look forward to your questions and feedback. Visit the project website for up-to-date information—and sign up below to get these newsletters sent to your inbox.

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[CAL Building Project Website](#)

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**Center for Active Living Building Committee:** Tom Carey (Chair), Beth Rouleau (Vice-Chair), Vicki Donlan, Joseph Kelly, Paul Healey, Jean Silverio, Steve Young, Jennifer Young (CAL Director, ex officio, non-voting member)

**Council on Aging (COA):** Joe Nevins (Chair), Sara Smithson (Vice-Chair), Rory Earley, Ethel Franks, Karen Johnson, Lucinda King-Frode, Leon Merian, Joshua Ross, Jean Silverio, Elaine Ward, Megan Hansen

**Friends of the Center for Active Living (FOCAL):** John Slater (President), Nick Amdur, David Anderson, Dorothy Galo, Yvette Kanter, Donna Linskey, Eileen McCracken

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