

Senior Center Build Schedule - Email from Josh Morse 31 Oct 2023

Good afternoon, Jack

Attached to this email is the best-case schedule for the Maynard Senior Center Project. It shows completion of construction by the end of 2030. I cannot stress enough how this is the BEST case. I don't see any realistic plan that could have a new Senior Center built faster than this.

The only way we could have a new Senior Center faster would be to lease a ~12,000sf facility. However, out of the 40+ Senior Centers I visited, the only one I saw that was in a leased building was in Acton. I don't like this as a permanent solution for Maynard. Acton's facility is quite out of the way, it has no street presence, it is not terribly attractive or welcoming from the outside, and it doesn't reflect the values of an age-friendly community.

Senior Centers struggle to bring younger seniors into their facilities. Without a dedicated space with ample room for programs and services that attract people of all ages, interests, and abilities, it's very difficult to get people past the stigma of going to a Senior Center. Street presence is important for this as well, so the location would ideally be visible and welcoming. A Senior Center buried in a large commercial building for example doesn't market itself well. There are many other reasons why I don't like the idea of leasing a building for the permanent solution, but you get my point.

On the schedule, there are several things to consider:

1. The Senior Center focus group would need to convince the SB and FinComm to seek \$500K for design this spring, for the fall TM to make this work. That may seem like plenty of time, but we all know that it can be challenging to build momentum and support.
2. I showed the site search process taking one year. I've seen this process take many years in and of itself. There's always controversy on which sites are the best. If you need to buy a site, that takes a long time to find, negotiate, secure funding for, and pass papers on.
3. I showed 2 years for the feasibility design phase. I've seen this take as much as 5 years. Issues that present themselves during this phase are things like should this be a multigenerational center or a senior center? What programs and services will be offered in the new facility? Will there be expanded hours? This will also be the phase where everyone figures out that additional staff will be needed to operate the building, and the costs for this will need to be discussed, debated, and secured or at least planned for.
4. I show the approvals period taking about 6 months. This is about average to go through it all, but if there's any controversy this can take a year or more. This is also the period in which the full project funding is discussed, debated, and recommended. This is where the impact to taxpayers will be realized, an override campaign will need to happen, and a successful TM vote, and subsequent ballot initiative will need to be successful. If either vote fails, you lose at least 6 months.
5. I show construction taking about 18 months which is very typical for new construction. If there is any construction phasing, or if the project is an addition and renovation of an existing facility, you can add another 6 months to this phase.

I will pull together some specific examples, but these projects take 7 years at best, about 10 years on average, and decades on the high end.

Josh Morse