

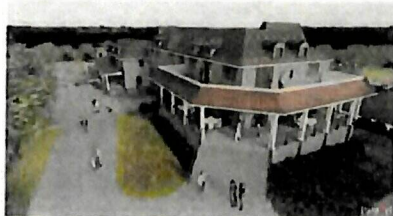
Appendix 8
*Copy of the City of Long Branch
Press Release*

Press Releases

Posted on January 11, 2024

City Presents New Health, Wellness, and Technology Center featuring Brand New Park

The City of Long Branch held a presentation previewing the plans for the new Health, Wellness, and Technology Center and the unveiling of an adjacent two-acre park at the corner of Bath Avenue and Third Avenue at the Council meeting on January 10th.



The total acreage of the complex is around four acres. The buildings, which housed the former Ronald McDonald House, as well as the grounds, were donated by Monmouth Medical Center in 2021. The plans for the project include a Health, Wellness, and Technology Center and expansive park. The project is funded by four million dollars in state and federal grants that the City has already received.

The Landscape and architecture of the Health, Wellness, and Technology Center building give a nod to historic Long Branch with a Large porch, grand staircase, and decorative tower.

The Health, Wellness, and Technology Center is composed of two separate buildings, one for health and wellness, and the second for technology, including internet and communication services. They are both open to the public for all purposes.

The Health and Wellness Center will consist of three floors. The Lower Level is essentially a fitness center for physical activities, such as treadmills and fitness equipment, as well as yoga and dance. The second or main floor focuses on nutrition, with a unique commercial-sized kitchen, where the City plans to hold cooking

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classes in addition to dietary education programs.

The third floor of the Health Center includes offices for health and wellness services that will be provided by the City and other government non-profit organizations.

A community room on the third floor will be decorated with preserved elements transferred from the former mansion located on the four-acre property. This includes a Gilded Age parlor room with a fireplace and paneling. This parlor will be reconstructed in the new Health Center as part of an important effort the city administration has taken on to preserve as much local history as possible. In the past year alone, this includes the new Fire and History Museum at the old Oliver Byron Firehouse, purchasing the Art Deco Santander Bank building to make a new Municipal Court, restoring the sanctuary of the 175-year-old First Reformed Church and preserving the Coca-Cola sign that dates from the early 20th century.

The Technology Center building is currently being used as the City's temporary library, while the main library on Broadway is being restored and expanded. The Technology Center building consists of two floors, which have already been renovated. It will house state of the art computers and workspaces where residents can come to seek employment and educational opportunities. The idea is to bridge the digital divide that often plagues seniors and residents with limited language or other technological skills.

The current computer and technical services provided by the Long Branch library will be available at the City's Technology Center. But, they will be augmented and include a new TV studio.

The new park will have many amenities for the public to utilize, including pickle ballcourts, tot lot playground, outside fitness area, and walking paths. There will also be a kiosk that will be used in warmer weather as an outdoor cafe.

"We are proud to bring another park to Long Branch that will include new courts and a new playground. This is going to be one of the largest parks we have made in Long Branch, and is the fourth one in

just a couple of years.

Our goal here is to make a Health, Wellness, and Technology Complex that will provide all sorts of resources for residents, but also just a fun spot to be," Mayor Pallone said.

"We are really excited for this project for many reasons. We are proud to be restoring some buildings and for preserving the parlor room from the former mansion. The Health, Wellness, and Technology Center is centrally located in Long Branch and near the hospital and train station, which will be undergoing more renovations to make it intermodal for trains, buses, and electric vehicles, as well as a new pedestrian tunnel to link the commercial and residential sections of the Transit Village on both sides of the tracks," the Mayor added.

Long Branch originally planned to move the Municipal Court and various City departments to the property donated by Monmouth Medical Center. However, the City has since acquired the former Santander Bank building on Uptown Broadway with a grant from the state. It will be used for these purposes instead.

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