

We want to acknowledge the following people for submitting comment cards with suggestions, questions and innovative ideas concerning the design for the renovation of the main shul.

Peyton Alexander
Susan & Israel Robinson
Arlene Appelrouth
Jack Shenk
Ed Nemeth
Anita Nemeth
Fay Grossblatt
Joel Alpert
Ilana Shenk

Mira D. Bergen
Meyer Greenberg
Rachael Siegelman
Jean Paley
Dana Rubin
Deena Koniver
Dana Rubin
Jonathan Levin
Davida Levin

Judy Lipis
Avi Bogart
Joshua Joel
Rachael Siegelman
Chari Lewis
Karen Kaplan
Chana Shapiro
Wendy Saul
Frank Vexler

Additionally, we want to thank and acknowledge the 11 other people who also submitted comment cards, but chose to remain anonymous.

We have reviewed all of the comments cards that were turned in at the meeting as well as those that were submitted online. Comments and suggestions can be entered online by clicking on the link at the renovation web site page.

We are in the process of responding personally to all comment cards, either by email or phone. Because of the sheer volume of comments, we have prepared the following summary and responses for the more frequently raised issues. To see a copy of the actual comment cards with all of the comments, please use the following link. [\[link\]](#) (Note that we have removed the names from comments where the submitter requested to remain anonymous.)

The Design Team

Rabbi Ilan D. Feldman
Mike Cenker
Jake Aronov
Sandy Cooper
Larry Grayson

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

There was an overall level of enthusiasm and appreciation of the proposed design, as evidenced both by the comments at the meeting on February 17th as well as the comment cards that were submitted.

The following design areas received the most comments:

Comment	Response
Black mechtza frame needs to be softened and less boxy	The model that was shown was only designed to show the functional capability of the mechtza design. We are working on softening the framework, implementing some gentler curves and refinishing the frame.
Number of seats available for high holidays (reduction in seats)	We are currently looking at opportunities to increase the number of permanent seats while incorporating extra room (over what is available today) for additional temporary seating. Several companies that specialize in providing seating solutions for synagogues are being interviewed for ideas.
Widen/expand/increase spaces for women to touch/kiss the Torah through the mechtza	We are looking at several alternative designs for these “spaces” that do not compromise the integrity of the mechtza.
Covered drop-off area	We are investigating alternatives for including a sheltered drop-off area.
Handicapped access to Bima	We are looking at implementing a solution that will allow for a temporary ramp to be installed/removed easily for those occasions when handicapped access to the Bima is needed. The reduction in the number of steps up to the Bima resulting from the leveling of the floor will make this solution viable.
Prefer 1-way glass instead of mesh on mechtza	We performed exhaustive research with a number of glass solutions as well as interviewing other synagogues where glass solutions had been implemented. It was determined that glass would not provide a solution for Beth Jacob for a number of reasons, some of which are unique to the design of Beth Jacob’s sanctuary. The reflective mesh provides a much more attractive solution all the way around, i.e. no sound reduction; no need to reverse the men and women; much less subjective to ambient light; etc.

Comment	Response
Ability to open lower windows for ventilation	The lower windows are being designed to have operable transoms at the top to allow cross-ventilation in the shul. The replacement of the arched windows with new technology insulated transparent panels and the use of insulated glass in the lower windows couple with the replacement of the environmental systems with more modern and energy efficient models will provide a much more pleasant and controllable climate.

The following design areas were addressed less frequently, but noted by more than one person:

Comment	Response
Children playing in garden area outside of lower windows	We are looking at ways to provide controlled access to this area.
Lighting to accentuate the stained glass windows	This has already been addressed by qualified lighting experts.
Cost of landscaping and maintenance	This is been taken into consideration when determining the type and volume of plants or ground cover.
Mechitza is too high	The proposed mechitza is 7" higher than the existing one and is designed to block the sight of an average male while standing. The proposed design blocks 95% more sight from the men's side than the current mechitza while affording the women's side a much more open line of sight to all areas of the davening. The model that was shown at the meeting was 4-6" higher than the proposed design.
Security & removal of concrete latticework	All design plans are to be reviewed by security experts.
Lighting with new widows & glare from men's side	All lighting issues are being addressed by qualified lighting experts.
Windows & lighting need to be energy efficient	Energy-conscious solutions are a major factor in all of the design elements so as to significantly reduce energy consumption.
Bookshelves and book storage	We are looking at alternatives which make use of the areas inside the sound lock as well as book shelves to the right and left side of the main entrance so as to reduce any chance of unsightly clutter at the entrance while still providing ease of access to frequently used materials.
Back-ups for mechitza in case of bulb outage or power failure	We are currently looking at contingency plans.