

Public Works FAQ

1. Why do we need a new Public Works Facility?

The existing public works garage is inadequate to serve current needs. It has serious structural and operational issues, including crumbling cinder blocks, roof leaks and inadequate maneuvering space. The facility provides an uncomfortable and sometimes unsafe environment for our public works staff.

The public works garage is also inadequate to serve future needs. Any interim “patches” to address immediate structural and operational deficiencies would not confront the longer-term need for of a public works complex that can adequately serve the town and ensure the safety and well-being of its workers. Delaying action will only result in the existing problems growing more serious, and building a new facility will only get more expensive with the passage of time.

2. What is the charge of the Public Works Design Committee and who serves on it?

The Public Works Design Committee is an adhoc committee established by the Selectmen in July of 2015 to guide the site selection and design of a new Public Works Facility for the Town.

The Members of the Committee are:

Steve Libby, Chair, Selectman Liaison
Lynn Conger, Vice Chair
Nat Berry
Jeff Amos
Don Libby

Jim Fitch
Beverly Cadigan
Josh McHenry (until Feb ‘16 – moved)
Ted Shane, Staff
Will Johnston, Staff

3. What has the Committee accomplished to date?

So far, the committee has completed the following tasks:

- Through a competitive bidding process, recommended that Oakpoint Associates, a Biddeford-based architectural/engineering firm, be hired to conduct an assessment of potential sites for a new public works facility and provide a preliminary site and building design. The Board of Selectmen endorsed this selection.
- Evaluated nine possible building sites throughout town for suitability, and choose three for additional assessment by the consultant.
- Based on the consultant’s assessment, recommended to the Selectmen that the site at 611 Lewiston Road – the current location of the Fire Station – as the preferred location for the facility.
- Conducted an online survey of 30 other public works facilities in Maine to assess typical facility characteristics and which components were considered by their operators to be most critical.
- Conducted in-depth, on-site visits to 10 facilities, which involved talking to operators and photo documentation.
- Provided feedback to the consultant on design features and facility components.
- Recommended that the Town pursue a “design-build” project delivery process.

4. What is the current concept plan for the new facility?

The current concept plan includes a compact 10-bay, 16,800 square foot garage, a salt and sand shed and a site footprint of 4-5 acres. This plan represents a considerable downsizing of an initial plan that called for a 16-bay, 22,000+ sq. ft. garage. The current plan includes a large drive-through mechanical bay as well as a wash bay. The concept plan is subject to change as the design-build process unfolds.

5. How and why was the town-owned property at 611 Lewiston Road (the Fire Station site) chosen as the location for the new Public Works Facility?

In determining the best site for the new facility, the town felt the best approach was to pursue a fact-based assessment process by hiring a professional consultant, who had both technical expertise and impartiality. Accordingly, the town contracted with Oakpoint Associates as described above. The committee initially evaluated nine possible buildings sites throughout town, and after discussion and site visits, recommended three for future study: the current Public Works Facility in Upper Village, 611 Lewiston Road (the FireStation site), and vacant town-owned land at 311 Lewiston Road. The consultant was then asked to evaluate the three sites based on the following parameters:

- Adequacy of space to accommodate the facility
- Road access/traffic impact
- Public safety
- Centrality of services
- Impact on groundwater resources
- Impact on neighboring residences
- Suitability of soils/slopes
- Permitting issues
- Potential for shared services

Based on this assessment, which included multiple visits to each site, the consultant found the site at 611 Lewiston Road to be the clear choice among the three – and overall to be an excellent location for a new public works facility with good site characteristics and room for future expansion. The committee accepted these findings and recommended to the selectmen that the site be chosen. The Selectmen subsequently endorsed this recommendation.

6. How is the issue of groundwater resource protection being addressed?

All three sites reviewed by the consultant were assessed for impact on groundwater resources. All the sites are at least partially within the town's Groundwater Protection Overlay (GPOD) zoning district, although none is over a state-mapped sand and gravel aquifer. This GPOD zone does not prohibit development, but rather limits certain uses and requires an additional level of review for others. The finding of the consultant was that, with proper design, construction and operation, a new public works facility could be safely built on any of the sites with no or minimal groundwater impacts. The site at 611 Lewiston Road was rated as slightly more favorable on this parameter because a portion of the lot and likely building site is located outside the GPOD zone. The Town is retaining the services of Drumlin Environmental, a hydrogeological firm, to provide additional guidance on this issue and address any remaining concerns.

7. What are the Committee's/Town's next steps?

- Continue to work with the consultant on project specifics, including recommendations on mechanical systems and energy efficiency.
- Develop a bid package as part of a design build process.
- Hold a public workshop on the project – probably in June – to provide additional information and solicit feedback.
- Review bids and select a contractor
- Develop a finance package based on negotiated bid price.
- Hold a second public workshop/hearing on the proposal.
- Seek voter approval of the project and approval of funding package.

8. How can I obtain more information on the project?

A public workshop with a full opportunity for questions and answers by committee members and staff will likely be held later this Spring or early Summer. Some information on the project and the committee's deliberations has been posted on the Town's website, and more is forthcoming – click on *Boards & Committees* and then on *Public Works Design Committee*. You can also contact Town Planner Will Johnston at 926-4126 x4, or wjohnston@newgloucester.com.