

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About the Future of Newbury Town Hall

What's the current situation?

The Newbury Town Hall structure at 25 High Road has operated past its planned life span. In 2016, Town employees moved out of the facility and its overflow office trailers due to health concerns.

The current rented temporary office space does not fully address the town's needs since it does not have the required vault space and on-site climate-controlled storage.

The Municipal Building Committee has developed a design that can better-serve residents well into the future. The Newbury Finance Committee has determined that the investment cost of the project is projected to be less than the cost of renting temporary office space.

How critical is the need?

As early as 2006, the Town's Master Plan identified the current building at 25 High Road as overcrowded and functionally obsolete. It is now unusable and non-compliant with current building codes and life safety requirements.

Formally-identified deficiencies of the 25 High Road building include:

Poor to hazardous air quality	Inadequate rest room facilities
Leaking roof during mild storms	Sprinkler system lacking / highly recommended
Rodent activity (CMR and OSHA violations)	Lack of proper document storage
Improper fire separation between floors	Overall crowding led to multiple trailer purchases
Non-compliant accessibility	Inadequate floor to ceiling height in basement

Why not just renovate the existing building?

The Municipal Building Committee approached experts to determine the feasibility of incorporating the existing building at 25 High Road into a new Town Hall Building. The experts they consulted with determined that it would actually *cost more* to renovate the current building at 25 High Street than to build a new Town Hall from scratch. It is highly likely that current building codes would require a cost-prohibitive complex renovation of the building's electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems, as well as various structural elements, accessibility items (ramps, elevator, etc.) and other features that are deficient in the existing building's design.

What options have been identified?

Option 1: Build a New Facility

Build a new, code-compliant, 2.5 story structure, thoughtfully-designed to incorporate residents' input, to meet Town programming needs and support projected growth needs over the next 30+ years.

Option 2: Raise – Renovate – Expand the Existing Facility

A key problem of the existing building is that the basement-level headroom is not code-compliant. The two options identified to address this (*and their associated potential drawbacks & costs*) are:

[1] Raise the first-floor level and install a new foundation:

Drawbacks/Costs: Could create access issues that would require additional investment. Also, the cost of renovation would likely be the same or higher than the cost of new construction.

[2] Lower the slab:

Drawbacks/Costs: Could introduce water table issues and the high cost of constantly mitigating them.

IMPORTANT: With renovation, ALL new work, including additions and work within the existing structure, as well as anything that is altered, must comply with current building code requirements. The total cost of this cannot be determined in advance.

What's the recommended solution?

The Municipal Building Committee (MBC) recommends building a New Town Hall on the existing town hall site as the cost-effective solution that provides the most overall value.

What other sites were considered for the new facility?

The MBC looked at several sites to choose the one to recommend. Those sites included the property at Governor's Academy on Route 1, Manter Field on Central Street, the Town Forest on Boston Road and the property owned by the town adjacent to Newbury Elementary School and south of Maple Terrace. For several reasons, from lack of utilities to not enough buildable land, none of these sites were suitable for the Town Hall project.

How can I ask questions or contribute input as a concerned resident?

The Municipal Building Committee welcomes all residents' input and invites productive conversation that serves to help proactively plan for the wellbeing of all Newbury residents. You may email your concerns or questions to: info@NewburyTownHall.com.

Who has compiled these FAQs?

These FAQs were compiled and produced by Citizens for a Bright Future for the Town of Newbury.

Who will respond to emails sent to info@NewburyTownHall.com?

When you email a question or concern to info@newburytownhall.com, you will receive a private reply directly from a representative of Citizens for a Bright Future for the Town of Newbury.

If you would like to receive further information or updates about the Newbury Town Hall project, please let us know, so we can email you with periodic updates going forward.

Otherwise, we will not keep your email, nor contact you any further once we have replied to your request or concern. We respect your privacy, and will also not share or sell your email address.