

Town Facilities “Master Plan”

Many people have asked if the proposed construction of a new Senior Center and Public Safety building is just a knee jerk reaction, or if it is part of a thoughtful planned process. The following is a response to that question:

For the past two years, the Town has been working with the State to acquire a 12 acre parcel of land on Rt. 68 located near the intersection of New Templeton Road. This site was chosen to be the future home of multiple municipal buildings as it is fairly central to all areas of town, is easily accessed via Rt. 68, and is a beautiful lot suited to the construction of multiple buildings. This was an excellent first step in the proactive planning of future town facility improvements.

Earlier this year, the Selectmen reviewed and accepted the 2015 Report of the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee (LRFPC). This report, which was the result of 18 months of research, analysis and planning, and which may be found on the main page of the Towns website (http://www.hubbardstonma.us/pages/HubbardstonMA_Webdocs/facilities2015). The analysis looked to compare options of repair of, repair and addition to, or replacements of existing town buildings to meet the existing and future needs of our town departments and offices. After carefully weighing all of the facts with the help of an independent architect (hired by grant funds), the committee developed a set of recommendations (a “master plan” of sorts) intended to guide the Town on the phasing of the necessary facilities renovations or replacements in a carefully phased process.

The report states that the Town should move forward with a “Phase 1” to include the construction of a new combined Police and Fire Public safety Building, and a new Senior Center; both to be located on the 12 acre DCR lot which the Town is in the process of acquiring. The construction of these buildings will ensure these departments have adequate space in energy efficient buildings that are fully code compliant. These new buildings will resolve all of the existing building deficiencies these departments currently face in their existing locations; as detailed in the above mentioned LRFPC report. Phase 2 of the plan will involve renovation of the Slade Building to allow all town offices to be located within that building. The offices currently located in the Library basement would move into the Slade Building; leaving the basement of the Library vacant for active library use. Phase 3 would involve seeking state grants and local funding for the renovation of the Library. All phases of work will include compliance with handicap accessibility laws, and all other code compliance as may be required.

In addition to the careful planning of phased of building improvements, the Town is also moving ahead with the creation of a thoughtful plan for the town center. This process includes the ongoing planning and design of Gardner Road (Rt. 68 north), and Worcester Road (Rt. 68 south). Town administration is working with the state to get the reconstruction of the Worcester Road section completed by 2018, and then will schedule the construction of the Gardner Road improvements. We are also actively working with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute to have engineering degree students develop preliminary engineering and design plans for the reconstruction of Main Street (Rt. 68) from Elm Street to Williamsville Road; thus saving the Town tens of thousands of dollars in engineering expenses. A newly formed Town Center Committee will work with all projects to ensure that all future road, building or other town center projects are done in a cohesive manner which meet the Town’s goal of having a safe and attractive community center in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.