

Planning for a new Department of Public Works (DPW) Facility

The Facility: Over Amherst's 257-year history, the Town has never built a Department of Public Works facility. Instead, in the 1940's, the Town retrofitted a 1915 trolley barn at 586 South Pleasant St. This building has seen very few significant improvements or modernizations even as Amherst's population has increased and DPW responsibilities greatly expanded.

Services: The DPW is an important first-responder when snow, storms, or other disasters hit. This essential Town Department is responsible for maintaining roads, water/sewer lines, pump stations, water/wastewater treatment facilities, 5 water supply wells, 2 reservoirs, 3 cemeteries, 80 acres of playing fields/parks/commons, 2 pools, sidewalks, and parking lots.



Why is a new DPW facility needed?

Due to the age, original intended use, and condition, the existing DPW headquarters has many problems and deficiencies. The facility's insufficient size restricts DPW operations, including vehicle, equipment, and material storage that are dispersed throughout the Town and/or stored outside, accelerating depreciation. Antiquated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems result in safety, ventilation, electrical operations, and locker rooms/restrooms that do not meet industry and code standards. Due to these issues, renovating the existing facility is estimated to cost the same, if not more, than constructing a new one.



Auto repair with no ventilation



Decaying Building



Vehicles Outside in Winter

What did the DPW Feasibility Study include?

In March 2016, a DPW Feasibility Study was completed at a cost of \$75,000. The study included assessment of current property and facilities, operational space needs, potential sites, basic building conceptual layouts, and related cost estimates. The full report is at www.amherstma.gov/documentcenter/view/34943.

What are the next steps towards a new DPW facility?

Once a site is finalized for DPW, the Town will hire a consultant to prepare the schematic design for a new DPW facility. This phase will include site-specific analysis involving existing conditions, environmental and geotechnical investigations, and a Traffic Impact Assessment. The final report will include detailed drawings showing all interior spaces, exterior spaces, and operational adjacencies and a detailed construction cost estimate.