

Fire Station Building Project

Information Session
January 2026



Project Background

How did we get here?

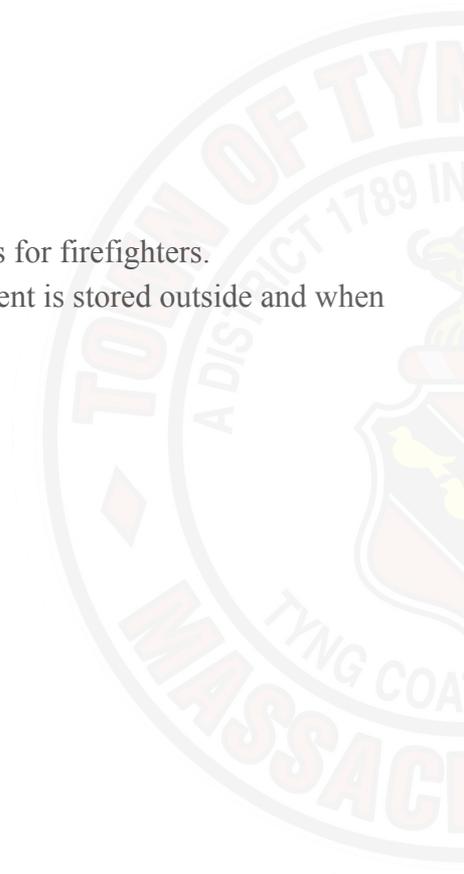
- **October 2020:** Select Board establishes a “Public Safety Building Study Committee” whose sole purpose was to look at the advantages, disadvantages, and relative costs of constructing standalone Fire & Police Stations versus a combined public safety building. Additionally, the Committee was tasked with looking at possible site options & delivering a final report to the Select Board.
- **December 2022:** The Public Safety Building Study Committee delivered its final report to the Select Board.
 - Recommended that the Select Board work to identify and secure the land necessary for either standalone buildings or a combined public safety building.
- **September 2024:** Using ARPA Funds, the Town hired a public safety architecture firm to conduct a *NEEDS ASSESSMENT* and full conditions assessment & site evaluation for PD and Fire. This report confirmed that the Fire Station was not suitable for our needs & that nothing on could be done to mitigate challenges on the current site.
- **November 2024:** At the direction of the Select Board, the Town Manager, Police Chief, and Fire Chief worked with the public safety architecture firm to identify the best parcel of land for standalone buildings (*SITE SELECTION*) -- understanding that the Town likely could not afford to construct a combined building at this time. The focus for both parcels was town-owned land that met the programmatic needs to avoid adding acquisition costs to the construction costs. Through this process, the town-owned parcel of land at 250 Middlesex Road was identified as the only town-owned parcel suitable for a new Fire Station at this time.
- **May 2025:** Town Meeting authorized \$300,000 for the schematic design of a new fire station at 250 Middlesex Road.

Project Timing

Why now?

Key Issues

- Current station was built for storing equipment and apparatus, not for a fully-manned station.
- Lack of space for decontamination (hot v. cold zones) which presents significant health and safety issues for firefighters.
- Current station does not have bays big enough to store modern apparatus. This means that some equipment is stored outside and when we purchase new apparatus we have to buy custom equipment which is more costly.
- Current site is not sufficient for expansion or modernization.
- Recruitment/Retention is difficult when potential recruits or transfers see the station.
- Costs are increasing by the day, & we know this problem isn't going away.



Site Selection

What guided the selection process?

Key Characteristics

- On the west side of Town, within the immediate vicinity of the Town Center to ensure adequate response times to any point in Town.
- Town-owned in recognition of the fact that residents will already face a tough decision when it comes to funding construction of a new fire station & a desire to be cognizant of that and not add acquisition costs to the final bill.
- Must have 1.67 acres of **buildable** land -- based on the Town's current needs and program as developed by the architecture firm that guided our selection process.
 - Bare minimum -- additional space required for adequate turning radius & other critical site elements.

Did other parcels fit the bill?

No, there are no other Town-owned parcels of land in the vicinity of the Town Center that have enough buildable land to accommodate our program. While there might be town-owned parcels outside of the target area that are large enough, the Fire Chief has expressed a strong belief that the target area is key to proper response times.

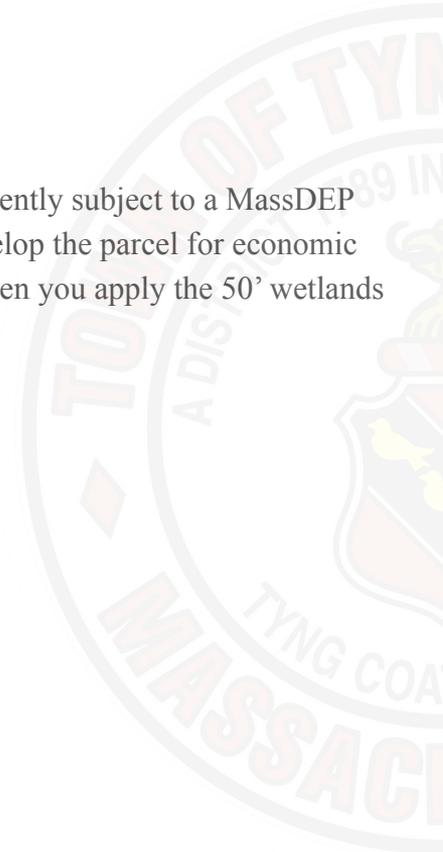
Site Selection

What guided the selection process?

Are there any town-owned parcels that come close to meeting the bill?

Yes, the Town owns a parcel of land at 292 Middlesex Road that was taken in 2022 by tax title. The parcel is currently subject to a MassDEP Brownfields Cleanup Project using a state grant. As a part of that grant, the Town is expected to attempt to redevelop the parcel for economic development, not town uses. Additionally, the parcel is 2 acres but there is less than an acre of **buildable** land when you apply the 50' wetlands *no buildings* buffer.

The **dark green buffer** is the 50' no buildings buffer which cuts off half the parcel. The **light green boundary** is the 100' buffer which would need to be replicated elsewhere.



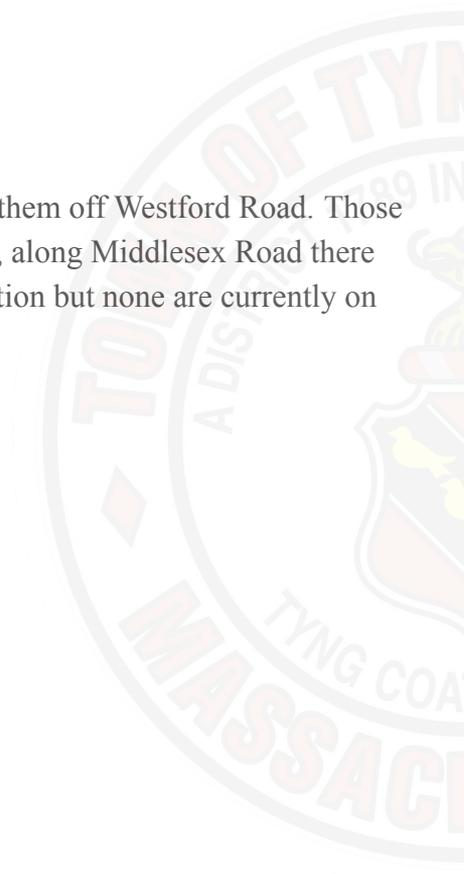


Site Selection

What guided the selection process?

Where there any private parcels in the target area that fit the bill?

Yes, the Town had previously had conversations with the Academy of Notre Dame about purchasing land from them off Westford Road. Those conversations ended in 2022 and the school has not expressed an interest in selling that land since. Additionally, along Middlesex Road there are a handful of smaller parcels that if purchased together could be large enough to accommodate a new fire station but none are currently on the market.





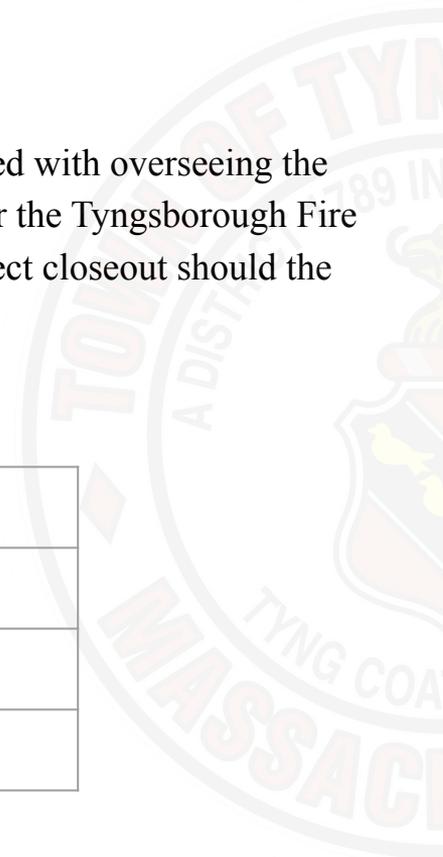
Fire Station Building Committee

Who is the Fire Station Building Committee?

Established by the Select Board on October 6, 2025, the Fire Station Building Committee is tasked with overseeing the development of program requirements, design, construction, and delivery of a new fire station for the Tyngsborough Fire Department. This committee will lead the project from the Schematic Design phase through project closeout should the project advance by vote of Town Meeting.

Committee Membership

Select Board Representative	Town Manager	Assistant Town Manager
Fire Chief	Assistant Fire Chief	Superintendent of Public Works
Finance Committee Representative	Resident at Large	Resident at Large
Associate Member (Resident)	Associate Member (Resident)	





Fire Station Building Committee (FSBC)

When do they meet and where can I follow their work?

Committee Meetings

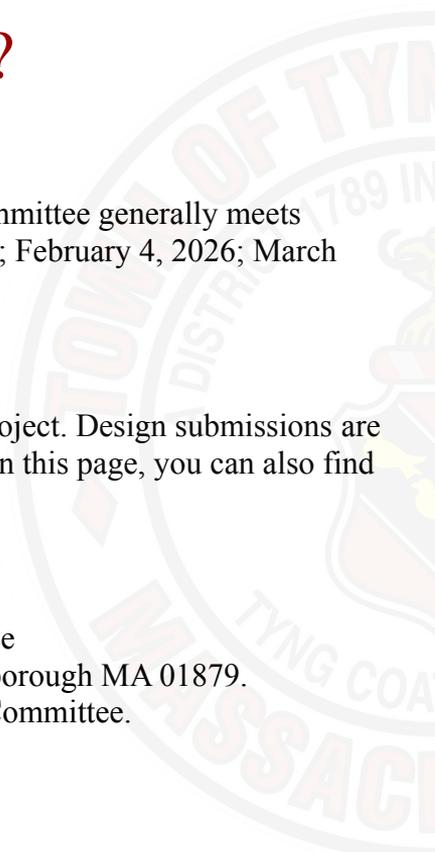
Meetings of the Committee are open to the public and posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. The Committee generally meets every other Wednesday at 6:00 PM at Town Hall. Upcoming meetings include: January 7, 2026; January 21, 2026; February 4, 2026; March 11, 2026; March 25, 2026; April 8, 2026; and April 22, 2026. Additional meetings are scheduled as needed.

Where can I follow their work?

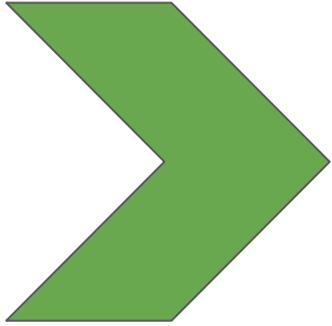
The Town maintains a detailed page on tyngsboroughma.gov that contains updates & documents relative to the project. Design submissions are uploaded to this page at the same time that the documents are shared with the Fire Station Building Committee. On this page, you can also find upcoming events, agendas, minutes, and a detailed FAQ section.

How do I contact the Committee?

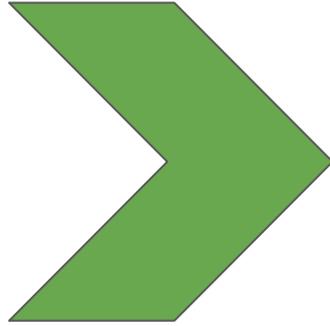
Residents can submit written comment to the Fire Station Building Committee through the Town Manager's Office (administration@tyngsboroughma.gov) or in writing to Fire Station Building Committee, 25 Bryant Lane, Tyngsborough MA 01879. Additionally, each FSBC meeting agenda includes a dedicated citizens time where any resident may address the Committee.



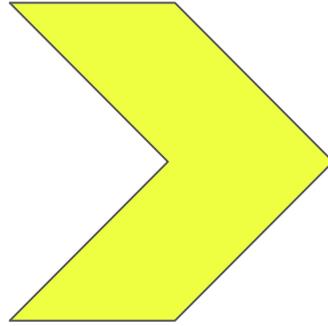
Project Progress



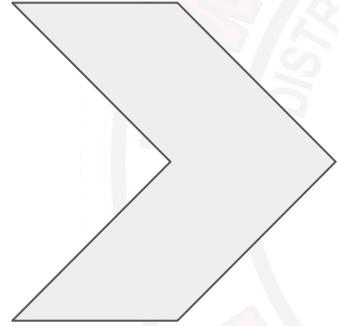
Needs Assessment



Site Selection



Schematic Design



Final Design &
Construction



Project Progress

Schematic Design

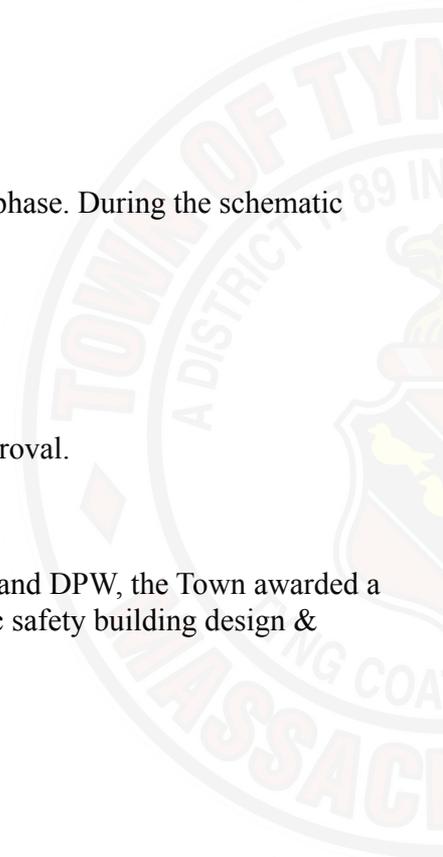
What to expect during the schematic design phase?

The schematic design is the first step in a full-design which can then be used to bid out a project for the construction phase. During the schematic design, the project team works with an architect and civil engineers to:

- Translate project goals into basic visual concepts;
- Use the specific project program (needs & goals) to define the building's scale, size, and shape;
- Develop high-level spatial relationships through floor plans, elevations, and site plans;
- Navigate site constraints, utility planning, and any zoning challenges before moving to the final design.
- Using the items above, develop detailed cost estimates which will be presented to Town Meeting for final approval.

Who is the Town contracting with for schematic design?

Following a competitive procurement process and thorough review by the Town Manager's Office, Fire Department, and DPW, the Town awarded a contract to **H2M Architects + Engineers** to serve as the Architects for the schematic design. H2M has extensive public safety building design & construction experience and came highly recommended from other municipal clients in Massachusetts.





Project Progress

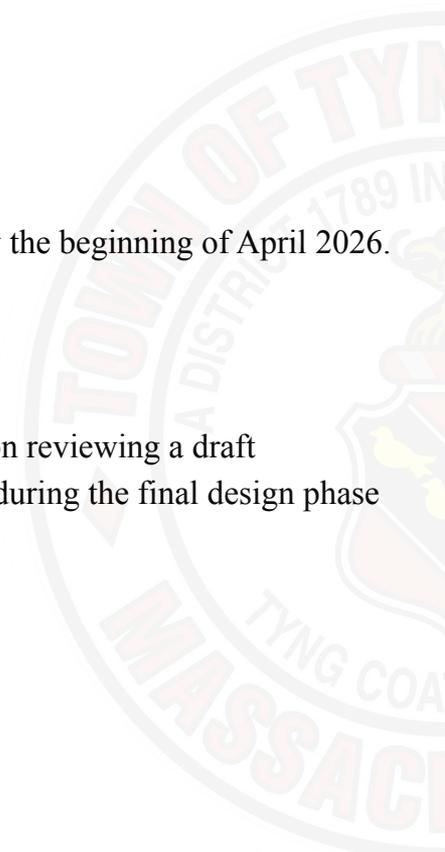
Schematic Design

How long will the schematic design phase take?

The schematic design phase commenced in earnest in November of 2025 and is expected to be completed by the beginning of April 2026. This will allow the Town to advance the project to Town Meeting as early as May of 2026.

Where does the schematic design stand today?

As of today, the committee has determined that the new station will be a single story and has been working on reviewing a draft site-layout which shows how the parcel will be configured. Of note, most of the finer details will be refined during the final design phase which comes after schematic design.





Project Progress

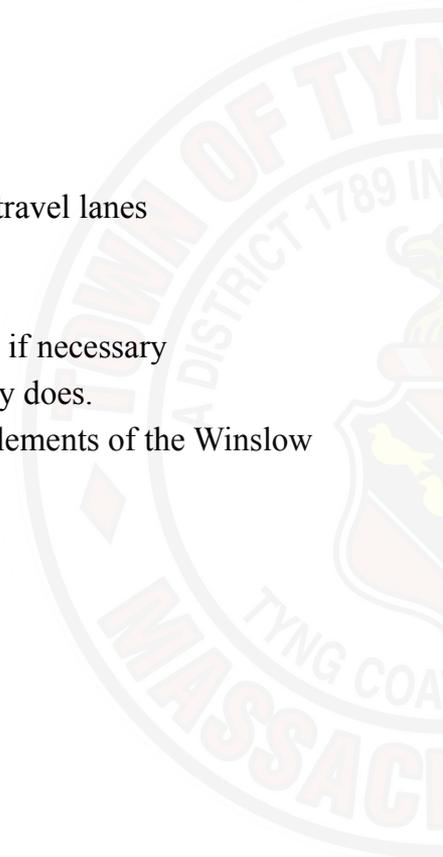
Current Site Layout



Project Progress

Current Site Layout

- Single-story building with five, drive through bays
- Access via Middlesex Road with a dedicate emergency apparatus lane and separated non-emergency travel lanes
- Maintains access to Littlefield Library with formalized parking area - 9 spots
- 32 parking spaces for Fire Station business and four responder parking in the rear of the building
- Footpath & stairs connecting to the Kendall Road Parking Lot which could serve as overflow parking if necessary
- Main Entrance to the station faces Middlesex Road in the same way that the Winslow School currently does.
- Emphasis on the design of the building that it fit in the Town Center with a desire to match historial elements of the Winslow School where possible.





Frequently Asked Questions - Regarding the Site

What would happen to the Winslow School if this project advanced?

In order to develop a station that meets the department's current and future needs, the Winslow School will need to be demolished. The project's final design would seek to include elements of the Winslow School's design in order to preserve the historic charm of the Town Center.

Are there other municipal uses for the Winslow School?

No. In 2022, the Town explored converting the Winslow School into a new Town Hall and converting the existing Town Hall into a Police Station. At the time, the cost to simply restore the school into an office building was \$13.1M. Given the time that has passed, any conversion of the school would exceed \$13M.

Did the town consider any non-public uses of the Winslow School?

Yes, in 2018, the Town released two "Requests for Proposals (RFPs)" to determine whether or not a long-term lease of the building to a private entity would be feasible. Under this RFP, the lessee would be responsible for the construction costs. The only interest was to develop the building into housing which did not align with the Town's long-term goals.

Is the Winslow School protected from demolition?

No. Although the Winslow School was added to the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places in 2017, nothing about that program prevents demolition or modification of any building registered on it. The decision to demolish the school rests solely with the Select Board under law, though funding would need to come from Town Meeting -- likely in the project budget for a new Fire Station.



Frequently Asked Questions - Regarding the Site

Can Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds be used to restore the Winslow School?

Yes, CPA funds can be used to restore historic buildings. However, the CPA funds in Tyngsborough are not sufficient to cover the cost of this project. The CPC has enough cash on hand to fund \$1M or \$1.5M without depleting all sources and is able to borrow money, but CPC funds are not sufficient to cover the debt service on a note that exceeds \$3M. Since we know that to simply restore the building for low-demand office space was at least \$13M, any project would need to involve non-CPA funds through a debt-exclusion.

Does the Historical Commission support the demolition of the Winslow School?

No. The Historical Commission has appeared before the Select Board and the Community Preservation Committee with plans to restore the Winslow School and develop a community center. The latest plan presented to the Community Preservation Committee involved restoring the building in three different phases to spread out the cost. This plan is not feasible as you can't restore only one-third of the building at a time. The current building is condemned and the entire building would need to be brought to code before obtaining occupancy.

What about the \$1.5M that Town Meeting approved in May of 2023 to restore the original school house and demolish the additions?

In 2024, a designer was brought on to develop cost estimates and the design necessary to accomplish the 2023 Town Meeting vote. That work determined that the project was short nearly \$1M and as such was tabled. All unspent funds would be returned to the CPC fund to be re-allocated for other projects by Town Meeting,



Frequently Asked Questions - Regarding the Cost/Funding

How much will a new Fire Station cost?

Although we won't have firm cost estimates until February when the schematic design is in advanced stages, we know that the average cost to construct a station that meets our needs is \$17M - \$20M based on square footage costs of recent projects. The schematic design will result in more accurate pricing based on the size & design of the station. That number will be known well before any project is proposed to Town Meeting.

How would we pay for the project?

Any project of this size cannot be funded out of the general fund. It would be funded through a *debt exclusion* which is a temporary increase in the levy limit until the project is paid off. In short, it is taxes raised above the 2.5% levy limit that funds the day to day of government. This is how the Middle School project was funded.

What if anything can we do to lower the impact on taxpayers?

The Town's general fund cannot support any portion of the debt. To help mitigate the impact of the Middle School Project, the Select Board committed \$1M from the general fund annually to reduce the borrowing costs passed on through the debt exclusion. That has put significant strain on the budget and could not be replicated here. However, some have expressed an interest in exploring reducing the CPA funds billed to residents to lower their overall tax bill. This proposal is being vetted by administration and would ultimately require Town Meeting approval.



Frequently Asked Questions - Regarding the Cost/Funding

Would it be more cost effective to build a combined Public Safety Building?

Yes, generally speaking it would be most cost effective to construct a combined public safety building at the same time. We know that while the Fire Station has the most critical needs as a result of the lack of health and safety controls, the Police Department has outgrown the current station. The current station has space and physical infrastructure challenges but does not pose the same health issues that the Fire Station does.

Additionally, the Town delayed major capital items on both buildings as it explored next steps. Over the last two years, we've reinvested into addressing the most serious issues at the Police Department to help extend the useful life of the building.

Constructing a combined building would likely come close to or exceed \$35M and the Select Board and Town Manager felt that such a large number was a big ask of taxpayers so soon after the construction of a new Middle School. For that reason, it was decided that current efforts would focus on the Fire Station.

