

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What size fire station is needed?

A: During the past 10 years, the Town hired an architecture firm on two separate occasions to determine the building size needs. Both reports confirm (within 2% of each other) that the required space needs for our firehouse is 18,000 usable square feet, with a 33% grossing factor which brings it to 24,000 square feet. A grossing factor accounts for hallways, closets, stairwells, lobbies, wall thickness, and other areas to operate.

Q: Are the three sites going into Phase II or is the committee planning to narrow it down?

A: The FSBC doesn't know yet. The FSBC is taking the approach that as long as sites are viable, then the sites will stay on the list. The FSBC notes that the more sites in Phase II, the longer the analysis will take and the more the analysis will cost; however, our goal remains to pick the site that best meets the Town's needs.

Q: Do we need to have a separate firehouse?

A: Boxborough analyzed and presented a combined Public Safety building in 2014; however, it was voted down by the Town at the Annual Town Meeting. At this time, the need for a new firehouse is most critical, which is why the FSBC was created.

Q: How will the wetlands at the existing firehouse site be addressed?

A: The design team is reviewing the existing documentation and conditions to determine if and how a new firehouse might fit on the site with the wetlands condition.

Q: What responsibility does our Town have to respond to emergencies on I-495?

A: If it is within our town lines, we are required to respond.

Q: How many sites were considered before the committee decided on the three sites?

A: In recent years, the Town has reviewed over 20 potential sites. Since August 2024, the FSBC has reviewed and considered five sites, and is continuing to investigate three sites.

Q: Who weighted the Site Selection matrix and how was it determined?

A: At the October 10, 2024 FSBC meeting, the committee reviewed the weighting of each item in Phase I with guidance from the Town's Architect and the Owner's Project Manager. The Phase II weighting will be reviewed once Phase I is complete.

Q: How is the committee addressing neighborhood concerns?

A: The FSBC is addressing community and neighbor concerns by listening, sharing information updates, offering site walks, allowing questions and comments, providing Listening Forums, and offering individual meetings with community members.

Q: What is the definition of an abutter?

A: An abutter is a property owner that is within 300 feet of the property line.

Q: How can neighbors who are impacted but not direct abutters express their concerns?

A: We encourage the community and neighbors to reach out to the FSBC through our email address fsbc@boxborough-ma.gov, by attending our FSBC meetings & information forums/site visits, by speaking during the community input sessions, and/or by filling out the feedback form on the [FSBC website](#).

Q: Since the Site Selection Matrix is quantitative, how is the FSBC going to come to a decision without taking into consideration the qualitative aspects, such as sight lines, and others, that may be mitigated?

A: The FSBC will consider all information. The matrix is a tool that will help narrow the site selection. There may be information discovered that is non-negotiable, and there may be other information that is found to be resolvable, reduceable or otherwise able to be mitigated, and those factors will be discussed and considered by the FSBC.

Q: If the 72 Stow Road site is selected, how will the stone wall on be preserved?

A: The Town will follow all of the required approval processes to maintain the stone wall along Stow Road.

Q: What is the schedule for the site selection? What is the process for the site approval? Who votes on it? What is the Town voting on?

A: The FSBC is charged with recommending a site based on the information gathered by the professionals that are hired by the Town and through community engagement. Once the FSBC has determined a site and worked with the Architect to develop drawings and the Owner's Project Manager to determine a cost estimate, the FSBC will request the next round of funding for the project through a vote at Town Meeting. Town residents will vote on approval of any funding for design, site procurement, and construction.

Why does the Town of Boxborough need a new fire station?

Our fire station is over 50 years old and is at the end of its useful life. A new fire station will be designed to meet the needs of the community and meet the space and equipment needs.

Did the Town consider renovating and adding onto the current fire station?

Yes, due to the condition of the building, this wasn't possible.

How much longer will it take until the station is built?

This depends on when we determine final site selection and the money is allocated to continue design. For more updates on the status of the project, check out our website:

<https://www.boxborough-ma.gov/727/Fire-Station-Building-Committee>

When and what is the process to approve the station, by citizens?

Once the FSBC has determined a site and worked with the Architect to develop drawings, the FSBC will request the next round of funding to finish the design through a vote at the Town Meeting. In the future, once design is complete, a cost estimate will be developed and a vote at Town Meeting will fund the project.

What will it cost to build the fire station?

It is unknown at this time. Once a site is selected and a design is completed, we will have a cost estimate.

Why have recently completed fire stations been less money to build?

It is nearly impossible to compare the design and costs of two different fire station projects. There are several independent factors that go into designing a fire station which are individual to each specific Town and department. Some of these include space needs, scope of operations (fire, rescue, EMS, prevention, education, communications, emergency management, etc.), current & future growth (Town, staffing, equipment, etc.), have a single or multiple stations, Town bylaw requirements, etc. A more accurate comparison is to look at the cost per square foot.

How much money has already been spent on the Fire Station project to date? Can any of these costs be recuperated?

Of the \$500,000, we have spent \$115,000. We have an additional \$197,000 committed for the consultants and \$188,000 uncommitted, in contingency remaining.

Will the station impact traffic on Mass Ave or Stow Rd?

A preliminary traffic study for Mass Ave and Stow Rd indicates that there will be a minimum traffic impact.

Why does the fire department need a training room?

Fire Fighters need a dedicated space to provide mandated training for the hundreds of hours that are required. The room will enable Boxborough to host local and state fire, emergency management, and medical classes. By doing so, more firefighters can attend and vendors sometimes offer registration fee discounts to the department. The Training Room is also the Emergency Operations Center in the event of natural and manmade disasters, such as COVID or major wildfires.

Why are there offices and dormitories?

The administrative duties the fire department has require an office for them to work. The dormitories are required because they live in the fire station for 48 hours or more a week.

How was the size of the apparatus bay determined?

Context Architecture reviewed the needs of the fire department, the current equipment, future equipment and the current Codes and Standards, they determined that more than 65% of the size of the building is the apparatus bay.

Is the Fire Station Building Committee coordinating with other Town Committees?

Yes

Do the Fire Apparatus mandate using their lights and sirens when traveling on town roads?

No

How many acres on the 72 Stow Rd site would be developed?

2 to 3 acres of the 11 acres would be developed

Why does the Town of Boxborough need a new fire station?

Our fire station is over 50 years old and is at the end of its useful life. A new fire station will be designed to meet the needs of the community and meet the space and equipment needs. Equipment and safety standards have changed, so a new fire station will allow us to better house our fire fighting and emergency equipment, protecting our investment in this equipment, and comply with current safety standards.

Did the Town consider renovating and adding onto the current fire station?

Yes, due to the condition of the building, this wasn't possible.

How were the fire station space needs determined?

Context Architecture reviewed the needs of the fire department, the current equipment, future equipment and the current Codes and Standards. They determined a new fire station should be approximately 24,000 square feet. Within this estimation, 65% (15,600 square feet) would be the apparatus bay. The remaining 35% (8,400 square feet) would contain the administrative offices, decontamination space, training room, dormitory space, showers and restroom, etc. Dormitories are required because fire fighters live in the fire station. Note the 24,000 square feet is an estimate that includes a grossing factor to account for walls, hallways, the elevator and other factors. The final size will be determined in the design phase and may be smaller.

Why does the fire department need a training room?

Fire fighters need a dedicated space to provide mandated training for the hundreds of hours of training that are required. The room would enable Boxborough to host local and state fire, emergency management, and medical classes. By having our own training space, our firefighters could participate in training during their regular work day rather than need overtime to attend training off site. Additionally, for larger training with fire fighters from other communities, vendors sometimes offer registration fee discounts to the department. The Training Room would also serve as the Emergency Operations Center in the event of natural and manmade disasters, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or major wildfire.

What will it cost to build the fire station?

It is unknown at this time. Once a site is selected and a design is completed, we will have a cost estimate.

Why have recently completed fire stations been less money to build?

It is nearly impossible to compare the design and costs of two different fire station projects. There are several independent factors that go into designing a fire station that are individual to each specific Town and department. Some of these include space needs, scope of operations (fire, rescue, EMS, prevention, education, communications, emergency management, etc.), current & future growth (Town, staffing, equipment, etc.), whether a community has a single or multiple stations, Town bylaw requirements, etc. A more accurate comparison is to look at the cost per square foot.

How much money has already been spent on the Fire Station project to date?

As of January 23, 2025, of the \$500,000 voted at Annual Town Meeting, we have spent \$115,000. We have an additional \$197,000 committed for the consultants and \$188,000 uncommitted, in contingency, remaining.

How is the Fire Station Building Committee (FSBC) selecting the location?

We are currently studying 502 Mass Ave and 72 Stow Rd to determine the most appropriate location. The FSBC has worked with the Owner's Project Manager to create a scoresheet that includes 14 differently weighted factors determined by engineering analysis, space needs, and community feedback. We will use the data from the site analyses to score each site and use that to guide our selection.

Will the station impact traffic on Mass Ave or Stow Rd?

A preliminary traffic study for Mass Ave and Stow Rd indicates that there will be a minimum traffic impact.

How many acres on the 72 Stow Rd site would be developed?

2 to 3 acres of the 11 acres would be developed.

Do the Fire Apparatus mandate using their lights and sirens when traveling on town roads?

No. In fact, Chief Kivlan has stated that they only use the lights and sirens when necessary. This is the current practice today and will continue, regardless of which site houses a new fire station.

How much longer will it take until the station is built?

This depends on when we determine final site selection and if and when Town Meeting allocates funds to develop the comprehensive design, which includes putting the project out to bid and selecting a contractor. We would then return to Town Meeting for the total cost to build the site. We will come to Town Meeting in May 2025 to request funds for the next phase. If those funds are granted and all moves well, we would expect to build a new station within 3 years. For more updates on the status of the project, check out our website: <https://www.boxborough-ma.gov/727/Fire-Station-Building-Committee>

When and what is the process to approve the station, by citizens?

Once the Fire Station Building Committee has determined a site, we will work with the Architect to finalize the conceptual design and an estimated cost for the next phase of the project. We will then come to Town Meeting for this second phase of funds, which would allow us to develop the comprehensive design, including all drawings, put the project out to bid, pre-qualify construction contractors, and select the best bid for the project. We hope to come to Annual Town meeting in May 2025 for this second phase. Once we have the final bid, we would come to Town Meeting again to request the funds to build the new fire station.

Is the Fire Station Building Committee coordinating with other Town Committees?

Yes. We have representation from the Select Board and the Finance Committee on the FSBC. Additionally, we have connected with other Town Committees as needed, and will continue to do so throughout the process.