

FAQ'S as of 10/28/24

We already voted this down. Why is it coming up again?

1. The proposal that was presented for approval earlier this year was for a building of 11,676SF at a cost of \$13,2M. In response to community input the MSCC reviewed the program requirements and determined the need remained. The new proposal for the Mendon Center is for 9,644SF at a cost of \$11,95M. The town expects to bond 90% of the project which would result in a tax increase of between \$130 and \$135 (approximately \$11.25 per month) on a house assessed valued at \$500,000.
2. The need remains for a facility that can accommodate the program requirements for the Community and the Sr. Center.

What are the challenges of the existing building?

1. Too small for the existing senior population (28% of Mendon is over age 60) and community population
2. The Senior Center is the Town's emergency shelter and the current facilities are insufficient for a town of our size.
3. Limited accessibility to one third of the facility (upper level)
4. Outdated electrical and plumbing
5. Insufficient space for simultaneous events and services
6. Inadequate kitchen facilities
7. Turning away/waitlisting people for events due to space restrictions
8. Restricted office space prevents confidentiality when providing services to people
9. Insufficient parking spaces
10. Dangerous street crossing to access the center from private parking that is increasingly limited.

Why can't we renovate the existing center?

The current location does not have:

1. Sufficient buildable land to accommodate a new facility and parking requirements is not available at the current location.
2. The current location does not meet State and Federal Building Codes and is not ADA compliant.

3. Existing services (including the food pantry, emergency shelter, outreach and socialization programs, and community meetings) will need to be relocated or suspended for approximately 12 to 18 months until renovations are completed. This could lead to additional operational costs to rent alternative facilities, a lack of continuity to deliver services, and would require additional staff to oversee multiple locations.

We need to fix the roads first.

1. State funding (Chapter 90) is currently provided for highway maintenance. It is recognized that the State funding alone is insufficient to support our roads. The Town Leadership is implementing a forecasting and improvement process to create recurring funds on an annual basis to expand the ability of highway maintenance, and is seeking additional funding resources from state and federal sources that will minimize tax impact for road improvement projects. This initiative does not impact that process. The Town conducted a pavement management study in the summer of 2023 which identifies priority projects. Those projects far outpace the funds received under Chapter 90. Last fiscal year, the Town appropriated an additional \$250,000 (similar to our Chapter 90 allocation amount) for road repair and improvement. I anticipate that this November's STM will have a warrant article asking to appropriate an additional \$250,000 for roads and \$300,000 for culvert repair, which is more than 20% of our available free cash. The Town is committed to improving transportation infrastructure alongside its municipal infrastructure. They are not mutually exclusive tasks.

How many years will the tax increase last?

1. The new facility will be funded through a debt exclusion and will be incurred as the project evolves. In other words, we will not be incurring the debt for the entire project on day one. Debt is cyclical and as previously funded projects are eliminated new projects can be funded. This means that once the debt goes away (30 years after it is issued) the tax goes away. The tax increase will be exactly equal to the cost of the debt. Each year the tax rate is set in such a way that the Town never raises more money than it needs to in order to pay the debt associated with the project. None of the increase goes to Town operating costs. This is not an operational override, which would increase the levy limit for the Town in an ongoing way. This is an exclusion, which means the tax increase is excluded from Proposition 2 ½ levy limits only for the life of the debt.

Can the rest of the land be used in the future?

1. The Mendon Center will take use approximately 3 acres of the approximately 20+acre parcel. The remainder of the land is under study by the Selectboard for Town use.

Why is the price tag so high?

1. Unlike residential construction, this is a municipal building which requires it be constructed under both State and Federal Regulations. Life Safety requirements exceed residential construction standards. The building must contain a fire-suppression sprinkler system and water retention tank and must be ADA compliant. The building is also being constructed to meet "Green Building" standards, which will reduce operational/energy costs of the new space.

Will this take away from the recreation fields for the schools?

1. No, currently the Selectboard is working with interested parties to create a Recreation Field Committee. That committee will bring detailed plans and requirements for use of available Town properties. CPA funds are raised through a 3% surcharge on property taxes. (The first \$100,000 of residential value is exempt). A description of how these funds can be used can be found support recreation can be found on the following link. <https://www.mendonma.gov/community-preservation-committee>

New Fire Station?

1. There is a process for new Capital expenditures. Part of that process is a formal request to the Selectboard. Then a needs analysis, including program requirements, and design, site selection, engineering study and cost analysis....

Other question from the FAQ'S as of 9/23/2024

- **Why does the project cost 11.95 million dollars?**

1. According to the latest ABC analysis construction costs are 37% higher than pre-pandemic costs.
2. The cost reflects the increased needs recommended for our community services and increased programming.
3. Emergency shelter capacity will meet statewide standards (including space, showers, and storage).
4. This is our fourth attempt at expansion to meet the needs of the growing senior population and the needs of the community.
5. Proposed new center will support both community and senior center needs.

- **Why was that lot selected?**

1. It is town owned municipal property
2. It is centrally located
3. It is large enough to accommodate growth
4. North Avenue traffic is 50% less than the current Providence Street location
5. 4 Sites went through a detailed evaluation, (current location, Morrison St., North Ave. and Rt 16. and North Ave across from Clough School.)

- **What will this new building do for accessible recreation and community use?**

1. Provide space for organizations to meet and hold functions/activities.
2. CPA funds will be used to provide: Shuffleboard, bocce, pickleball court and a basketball court and ADA accessible walking trails.
3. Provide space for people to gather, socialize and build community relations.
4. Provide space for family functions and multigenerational programs.

- **Is the land environmentally safe?**

1. Yes, no contaminants were found in recently performed soil testing.

- **What will happen to the current building now housing the Senior Center?**

1. The building will be repurposed for possible use by the Highway/Parks Depts saving future capital expenditures.

- **How was the size of the building determined?**

1. The size was based on a community needs analysis and public input.

- **Is there any potential for future expansion?**
 1. Yes, the project is designed to handle future expansion.
- **Will there be ample parking to accommodate senior and community recreation users?**
 1. Yes,
 2. Parking was included in the design and will meet the needs of the facility.
- **How will this new structure affect traffic flow on North Ave?**
 1. The facility will have minimal impact on North Avenue Traffic.
- **Will this be a “green building”?**
 1. The building will be constructed as solar ready and using energy efficient technology.
- **Other Data that may be helpful**

Senior population as of 11/6/23	28%	1,698	Age 60 +
Expected to grow to	30% by 2030		
Support FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS LESS THAN 60 YEARS		778	
VOLUNTEERS - TOTAL INDIVIDUALS		62	