

FAQ

Richmond Town Center Renovation *Cost Estimates Itemized*

The general costs for the project reflects spending in 6 major categories:

General contracting	\$532,650
Sitework	\$1,162,413
Building	\$3,224,252
New stair tower	\$372,416
Flood resiliency & roof structure reinforcement, addition	\$1,208,759
Markup, insurance, bonds	\$763,808
SUBTOTAL	\$7,264,298

In addition, there are hard costs, fees, typical miscellaneous costs, planned additional owner purchases and contingency & inflation fees. These include:

+15% contingency	\$1,089,645
+Fees (required fees, Clerk of the Works, bldg. envelope commissioning)	\$694,537
+Misc. costs (bids, moving & storage, risk insurance)	\$106,500
+7.5 Inflation allowance (to bridge time from bond vote to construction bid acceptance)	\$686,623
SUBTOTAL	\$2,577,305

TOTAL PROJECT \$ 9,841,603

FINAL 11/4/23

FAQ

Richmond Town Center Renovation

Preparing for the Next 100 Years

An Amazing Asset

Throughout its 116-year history, the Richmond Town Center building has served as a focal point for our community and is a key component of our “walkable downtown.”

Why is this renovation project needed now?

The Town Center building, built in 1907, has reached a point where doing nothing is not an option. Deteriorating windows, electrical, HVAC and plumbing systems are impacting the working conditions for town employees and tenants. The lack of a safe egress from the second floor and lack of sprinklers and a building-wide fire alarm system are safety concerns. In addition, increasing energy costs, the effects of climate change, and addressing flood resilience make this renovation necessary. The 1953 addition that houses the Post Office is also deteriorating, with holes in the concrete foundation, flooding issues and little to no insulation.

The Town Center & Library Building Committee's Work

The Selectboard formed the Town Center & Library Building Committee in 2019 to propose solutions to the deteriorating Town Center Building & campus. The Committee solicited community input, worked intensively with architects; site planners; engineers; local/state/federal zoning regulators and others to gather recommendations, evaluate multiple options, finalize a preliminary renovation plan and develop a realistic cost for the project.

Recommendation

The committee believes that the renovation plan being presented will address existing issues and ensure that the Town Center, Post Office and site are safe, functional and adaptable, flood resilient and energy efficient well into the next 100 years.

Highlights of the proposed renovation plan

- This renovation plan creates an essentially “new” building inside the existing, structurally-sound, envelope.
- HVAC, plumbing and electrical systems will be brought up to code and meet energy-efficiency standards. It includes adding missing ventilation and cooling and upgrading the building's air-quality to current standards.
- Existing windows will be replaced with new energy-efficient windows that will also restore the historic appearance of the building including restoring the windows at ground level.
- Fossil-fuel based heating system will be replaced with high efficiency electric heating & cooling
- Interior work spaces will be reconfigured for more efficiency, keeping all town services on the first floor. Office and meeting spaces will be upgraded to meet current and future technology needs.
- Fire alarm system will be brought up to code and a sprinkler system added
- The iron fire escape will be replaced with a safer enclosed stairwell which meets code
- An inadequate roof structure, flooding issues and poor insulation in the 1953 Post Office addition will be addressed

How much will it cost?

The current estimated cost of the proposed renovation is \$9.85 million. Over a 30-year bond period, this would represent about a \$96 increase in taxes for each \$100,000 of property value and the amount would decrease over time. The committee recognizes that this is a significant investment for taxpayers. The Town and Committee have been, and will continue to, explore all potential local, state and federal grant programs to try and reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Does the existing building meet our Town needs?

The Committee and architects interviewed town staff and current tenants and determined that the existing building is large enough to house the current and future town needs and preserve some tenant space. The basement can no longer be used as occupied space, only storage.

Why not build new?

The Committee explored building a new Town Center building—either on the existing site or at a new, as yet unidentified site—in great detail. The architects estimate building a new building with the equivalent square footage would cost \$2-3 million **more** than this plan. There would also be additional costs for acquiring, surveying and permitting a new site or demolishing the existing building as would be required by zoning regulations. Engineers who examined the existing building found that the basic structure, including the existing roof, is sound. The Committee felt that demolishing a structurally-sound building that can be renovated to meet all of the town's current and future needs would not be cost effective nor it would it be environmentally responsible.

How will it address energy efficiency?

The replacement of a fossil-fuel based heating system with high efficiency heat pump technology and upgrading the old, single-pane windows with modern double-pane windows as well as adding insulation to walls, window channels and Post Office will significantly improve the energy efficiency of the building. While solar is not included in the proposed bond cost at this time, reinforcing the roof structure for the post office will allow for adding solar panels to the roof of the post office in the future. The Committee is exploring alternative ways solar might be financed.

How does the renovation address future flooding events?

A renovation requires that we make changes due to flood-related Zoning regulations. These changes include moving the building mechanicals out of the basement, making some changes to materials used in basement renovation and using the basement only for storage of non-critical materials. The basement cannot be used to for office or tenant space. After consultation with federal, state and local zoning regulations and staff, installing pressure drains in the basement and allowing some flooding to occur is the best way to make this building more resilient to future flood events.

Will the historic look of the building change?

Several aspects of the renovation will restore the historic look of the building closer to the original. This includes new windows with the original full height (no panels at the top), windows at the ground level, an open staircase from 1st to 2nd floor and restoration of some of the tin ceilings.

How is the Richmond Police Department accommodated?

The Police Department will have updated office space and a locker room on the 2nd floor of the building. This office space could be reconfigured for the town or tenants if the Police Department needs are reduced or is moved to some other location in the future. The Committee felt that expanding the Police Department to include a separate entrance, Sally Port or processing area was not cost effective at this time.

What will change on the Post Office?

This 1953 addition has structural, flooding and energy issues that must be addressed including a deteriorating cement block foundation, insufficient roof structure and insulation and a below grade pipe trench that is prone to flooding. The plan makes some minor changes to the interior configuration requested by the Postmistress but keeps the existing windows, PO Boxes and back work areas.

How will town services be accommodated during construction?

Both Town & Post Office services will be affected by construction. Selectboard meetings may be moved to the Library Community Room. Construction may be phased to allow some services to remain in the building and the remote and hybrid methods practiced to deliver town services and meetings that were used during COVID may also be used. The Postmistress is aware that Post Office services will be affected but feels that this can be accommodated. Tenants are aware that their access to the building will be affected.

Will all of the current tenants stay in the building?

The renovation can accommodate the needs of the US Postal Service and could continue to accommodate Mount Mansfield Community Television, Richmond Historical Society and the Community Senior Center. Organizations that are using the building for non-critical storage can continue to do so in the basement space but it could not house Radiate Art Space. The Selectboard will determine how to allocate space in the plan to accommodate current and future tenants.

Does this pay for any work on the Library building?

This bond does not include any work on the Library building but site improvements will benefit Library patrons.

How does the new Site Plan improve the campus?

The site plan improves the flow of traffic in the parking lot and maintains the same number of parking spaces. It provides a safer walking flow between Town Center, Post Office and Library and relocates handicap parking for the Library and Town Center to eliminate safety issues. Finally, it creates a more welcoming street-scape and adds some green space for community activities.

Where can I find more information?

For information, site plans and design documents, go to <https://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-meetings/town-center-and-library-buildings-committee>

Who can I speak with about this project?

If you have questions or concerns, you can contact any member of the committee:

Jeff Forward, Chair
Josh Arneson
Laurie Dana
Amy Wardwell
Dave Healy
Jake Marin