



TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY

Town Manager's Office
51 Depot Square, Suite 3
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-748-3926
www.stjvt.com

Town Clerk 802-748-4331
Dispatch 802-748-2170
Police 802-748-2170
Fire 802-748-8925
Public Works 802-748-4408

ST. JOHNSBURY ARMORY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

April 28, 2025

Why does the Town need a new police station and regional dispatch center?

The existing footprint for police and dispatch at 1187 Main Street does not fully accommodate the needs of the department. The processing area is non-existent, there are no holding cells, no provisions for officer changing rooms or storage of personal items, and the space dedicated to witness/suspect interviews is inadequate. Also, there is no secure area for transporting perpetrators to and from the facility—all substandard for a modern police department.

A new facility would assist Town Officials with staff recruitment, retention, and training which is critical in a very competitive market for police officers.

Why is the Armory on Main Street a good location for the police department and dispatch center?

Renovating the historic Armory and keeping the police and dispatch station in a prominent downtown location makes sense for several reasons:

- Visibility – A prominent Main Street location will keep the police department front and center, which provides a feeling of security and serves as a deterrent to crime in our historic district.
- Proximity to Public Schools – A downtown location allows for fast response times to our schools.
- Central Location to Service Area – A downtown Main Street location provides an even response time to areas we serve.
- Removing a Town liability – The contaminated and blighted Armory is a Town liability. The Town tried on several occasions to convert the property into private beneficial use but was unsuccessful because of the cost to remediate environmental contamination. Remediating and renovating the building will eliminate this liability and put the building back into productive use.

Why does the Armory Project cost so much?

COVID-19 put extreme pressures on the supply chain, and combined with a shortage of contractors, project costs skyrocketed. The construction industry continues to experience disproportional inflation and we are not seeing any trends that imply any reductions in costs for construction.

If the bond vote is successful will Town Officials continue to seek alternative funding sources to reduce the cost of the project to the tax-payer?

Yes, Town Officials are committed to finding other funding sources to reduce the cost of the project to the tax-payer.

Why not demolish the Armory and build a new facility on the property?

There are several reasons why demolishing the historic Armory building and building new does not make sense:

- 1.) Remediation and demolition were expected to cost between \$3M and \$4M. The Town would have had to pay 100% of the remediation and demolition because the state and federal funding that is available for remediation is tied to Historic Preservation criteria (22VSA14 for state, Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act for federal).
- 2.) Demolition of the historic Armory would remove an historic structure which is deemed important for our region in Vermont and within the historic Main Street corridor of St. Johnsbury.

What committed funding sources are part of the project?

- \$500,000 EPA Cleanup Grant
- \$1,200,000 Grant from the Vermont Brownfields Remediation Grant from the ACCD
- \$330,000 Grant from the Vermont Community Development Program Community Development Block Grant
- \$585,000 Grant from Senator Sander's Office Congressional Direct Spending Program (administered by FEMA)
- \$162,000 EPA Revolving Loan Fund Grant from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.
- \$162,000 EPA Revolving Loan Fund Loan from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission at 0% interest.
- The Town is working with NVDA to secure an additional \$400,000 for the Armory project. These funds will only be available for the environmental assessment and cleanup phases of the project. 50% of this funding will come to the town as a loan at 0% interest, and the other 50% will come to the town as a deferred loan, or grant.
- The Town is estimated to receive \$400,000 in the form of tax credits for the energy efficient HVAC system that will be installed.
- \$5,400,000 Bond from the Town of St. Johnsbury, VT
- Multiple smaller scale grants from the EPA TBA program, the NVDA EPA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Fund, USDA RD Technical Assistance Grant funds.

**Total Grants, deferred loans (act as grants), and tax credits = \$3,377,000

What is the status of a regionalized fire department, and where would a regional fire station be located?

The Town is working with neighboring communities to formulate a strategy to regionalize fire services. Although much work is to be done with neighboring communities, the Town of St. Johnsbury is working

to identify sites that could serve as home to a regional fire service. St. Johnsbury and surrounding communities will have to agree on a location and how to pay for a new regional fire station.

When will a new fire station be built?

Although the regionalization study does not address the building of a new fire department facility, the Town of St. Johnsbury is working to identify potential locations. Because of the existing conditions at the current facility, Town Officials believe that a new facility will be needed within the next three to five years.

What will happen to the existing police and fire station building at 1187 Main Street when the essential services leave the premises?

Relocating the police/dispatch and fire departments to new facilities will allow the Town to sell the existing building at 1187 Main Street to a developer (private or non-profit) whose vision best serves the community. If the property is sold to a private developer or business, additional tax revenue will be generated for the Town. Several developers have expressed interest in purchasing and redeveloping the 1187 Main Street property.

How does the police department serve all residents of St. Johnsbury?

- The Town police provide protection and community service to schools that educate St. Johnsbury's entire population.
- The Town police enforce Town ordinances and state laws within the Special Services District. These laws and ordinances protect all residents who are employed, shop, own a business, recreate, dine, attend events, go to libraries, go to classes, etc., whether or not you live in the Special Services District or not.
- The Town police act as backup outside the Special Services District for the State Police, and Sheriff's Department, and vice versa.
- The Town police provide services to the Caledonia County Courthouse that serves residents of Caledonia County.
- The Town police enforce parking ordinances whether you are a resident within the Special Services District or not.
- The Town police provide enforcement at many events open to the public.
- The Town police provide services to the homeless shelter outside of the Special Services District.
- The Town police provide services to the Department of Corrections.
- The Town police provide security to financial institutions who serve the greater St. Johnsbury population.
- The Town police, in conjunction with the Town Dispatch staff, provide fingerprinting services for the region. This serves our school system, courts system, health services, and more.
- The Town police provide emergency backup services to our local and regional health providers.