

June 2014 (revised from March)

The future of the North Dartmouth Library

Frequently Asked Questions

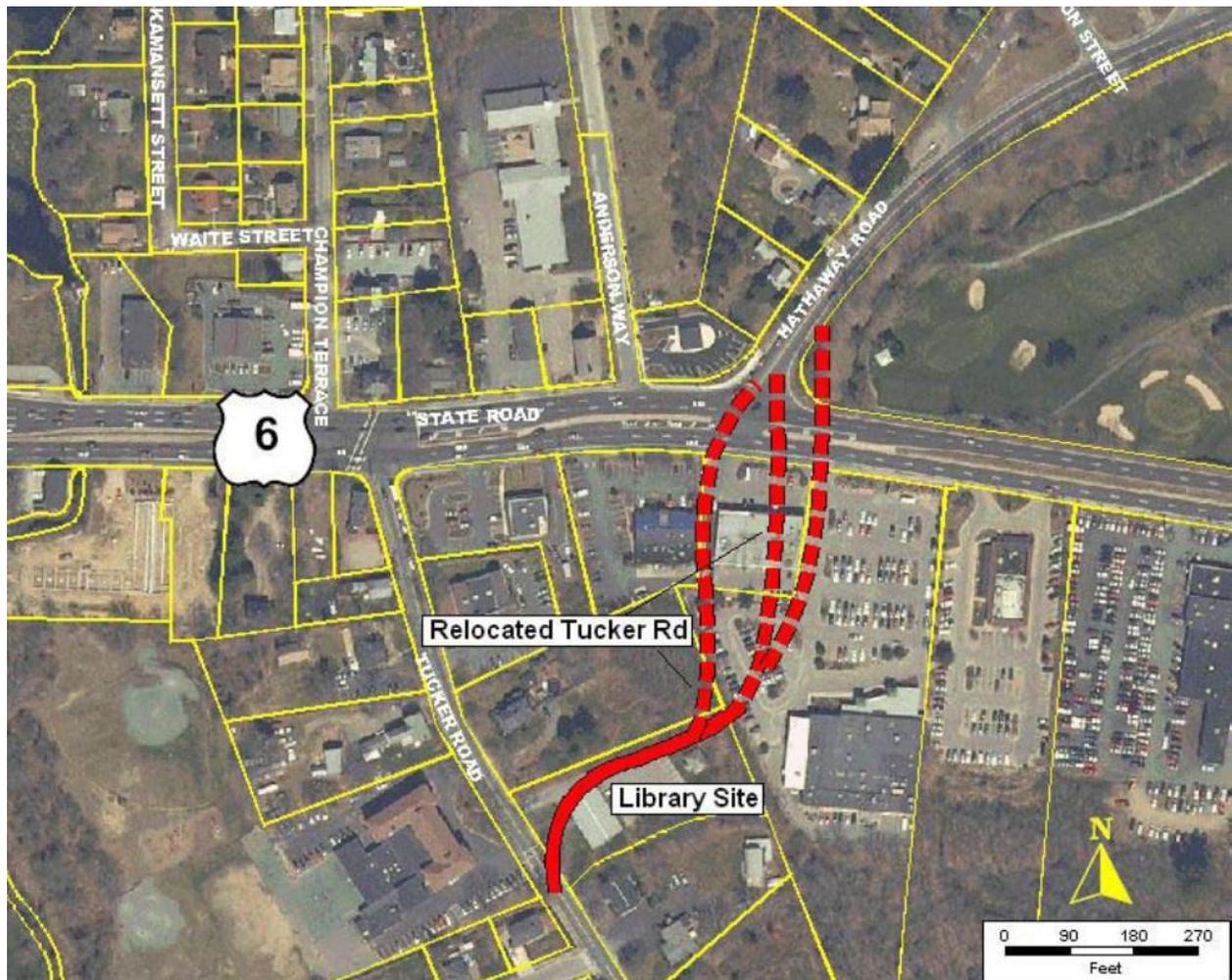


Illustration from page 28 of SRPEDD report

<http://www.srpedd.org/manager/external/ckfinder/userfiles/resources/Transportation/FaunceCorner.pdf>

Why is the town revisiting the idea of replacing the existing North Dartmouth Library?

It is expected that the existing building on Tucker Road will be demolished within the next five to seven years, to allow for the relocation of Tucker Road. North Dartmouth residents have supported and used their branch library since the first one was built in 1911. When the library on Tucker Road opened in 1961, its annual circulation was 43,789. By 2006, branch circulation had climbed to 106,863, and the facility on Tucker Road could not support the traffic and level of use. Branch hours and services were cut during the last decade due to concerns about safety as well as budget constraints. The probable demolition of the building on Tucker Road makes this the right time to explore the options for creating a branch library that is better suited to serving North Dartmouth residents.

Why is there a plan to relocate Tucker Road?

In 2007, the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District conducted a traffic study of the Faunce Corner Road corridor in Dartmouth and found dangerous traffic congestion in that area. The intersection of Route 6 and Hathaway Road is ranked as the 60th most dangerous intersection in the state. The study recommends correcting the hazardous conditions at Hathaway Road by relocating Tucker Road so that it aligns with Hathaway Road at Route 6. This would create a four-way intersection and allow the installation of traffic lights to regulate traffic flow. The study states that Tucker Road must be moved in order to install lights at this intersection.

Why does this plan require that the North Dartmouth Library be demolished?

There are three possible layouts, but each one requires the demolition of the existing branch library building. When Tucker Road is relocated, it will cut across the front lawn and walkway of the existing library, travel through the north-west corner of the building, then up the driveway and through the parking lot.

(Please see the illustration on the first page.)

Why doesn't the town just move the library across the street into the vacant Gidley School building?

The Gidley School building is a wood-framed structure and would collapse under the weight of the library collections. No wood-framed building would be suitable for use as a public library.

Does this mean that there will be no library in North Dartmouth?

The town and the library board want to explore the possibility of replacing the branch library, so the announcement of a Library Planning and Design grant round by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in June of 2013 was very timely. With the approval and support of town officials, town boards, and town meeting, an application has been submitted for this grant. On June 5, 2014, Dartmouth was awarded a provisional grant of \$50,000 towards the cost of planning and designing a library to replace the current facility on Tucker Road. The town has already appropriated its required matching funds of \$25,000.

What happens next?

The long process of creating a Library Building Program will begin. Some of the essential elements of such a plan are listed below:

1. A concise history of the library and the community
2. Community analysis with demographics and 20-year projections
3. The library's mission, values, and service roles
4. Previous and current facility and organizational planning efforts, if applicable
5. Description of the existing building
6. Analysis of current collections and services
7. Pertinent trends and statistics, including staffing and public use
8. Special circumstances for your library and/or your community
9. A Needs Assessment
10. Area descriptions & adjacencies
11. Site & exterior considerations
12. Requirements (if applicable) for:
 - Sustainability
 - Accessibility
 - Security
 - Acoustics
 - Data & Telecommunications
 - Electrical
 - Furniture, fixtures & equipment
 - Ergonomics
 - Signage
13. Photographs with descriptive captions (site, building exterior, building interior) of existing facility as well as potential new locations, if applicable

How does this grant help to replace the existing North Dartmouth Library?

Towns that are awarded the grant will have two years to do all the work necessary to create a Library Building Program. The grant funds may be used to pay fees for:

- Preparation of a Library Building Program by a librarian/consultant.
- Site investigation and selection – topographic survey, test borings or percolation tests, soil analysis, or other geological testing.
- A Massachusetts Registered Architect to conduct feasibility studies and site selection, and develop a preliminary design.
- An engineers' evaluation of an existing structure to determine its condition and suitability for a public library.
- Project management services as mandated by state public construction law.
- A professional independent cost estimator to prepare a construction and project budget based on preliminary plans.

Is the town looking at new construction or considering existing buildings?

Both options will be considered during the grant process. Libraries require a much higher weight-bearing load than schools, businesses, or offices. No wood-framed building would be suitable, and any commercial building would require renovation. The cost to renovate an existing building to meet the standards needed for a public library may be higher than the costs to construct a new building. A new or renovated library will need to be completely handicapped accessible and should be as energy efficient as possible.

Where will this new library be located, how big will it be, etc.?

The answers to all questions about location, size, staffing, services, cost, etc. will be determined during the planning process. It is essential that the community, library staff, town boards, town departments, and other town entities participate in the planning for a new library. The end result of this process is to have a Library Construction Program for a facility which is designed to meet the needs of and provide the services requested by the residents of the town. The Program would be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for their approval. A Library Construction Grant round is anticipated for 2016, and it is our goal to be ready. The Planning & Design Grant round provides funds to cover the expense of preparing for the Construction Grant round.

How would this library construction project be funded if the town is awarded a construction grant in 2016?

On average, a construction grant covers 50% of the total eligible project costs. Communities typically raise the remainder of the funding through fundraising and/or municipal debt exclusion or override, requiring voter approval.