

What the Town Would Get for \$5M in Improvements at the DPW Garage

Author : David Gurliacci

Categories : [Government & Politics](#)

Tagged as : [Darien Department of Public Works](#), [Darien Department of Public Works 2016](#), [Public Works Garage](#)

Date : May 3, 2016

A Department of Public Works is one of any town's "critical" departments — keeping streets cleared and passable for first responders and others after storms and other emergencies, and, year-round, maintaining crucial public services, a consultant remarked in a presentation to the Darien Board of Selectmen.

The consultant, David Stein, a principal with Silver + Petrucelli, an architectural and engineering consulting firm, recommended about \$5 million worth of renovations and some expansions of the DPW garage building, originally constructed in the early 1940s, that houses many of the vehicles and provides a workplace for many of the employees of the town DPW.

(Maintenance employees for Darien Public Schools and the Parks & Recreation Department also work there, and equipment for those departments is stored there.)

Despite renovations over the decades, the garage building, located next to the town transfer station and recycling center, has a number of problems that reduce safety, make it harder for employees to work there and for the town to maintain its equipment there:

- The sprinkler system is below standard.
- Water pools on the flat roof, which needs be improved.
- Employees, who can be working long hours during storms, don't have anything more than a "makeshift bunk room" to wait in.
- There need to be clear entrances and exits in the front parking lot, which would be safer.
- There is no bay dedicated to the repair and maintenance of vehicles.
- There is no indoor bay where vehicles can be hosed down and cleaned — that occurs outside, even in winter.
- Ventilation is needed in the vehicle parking areas within the garage.
- The heating oil-fueled electric generator is located on the lower level of the building, where flooding is more likely to occur. (It would be replaced by a natural gas generator on the higher level of the two-story building.)

Public Works Director Ed Gentile told selectmen that, "I'm hoping within the next three to four weeks" negotiations with Silver + Petrucelli would be concluded for the firm to draw up more detailed plans for the site and help with the project, which would eventually need a contractor for the building and renovations work.

The total project cost of about \$5 million includes a 15 percent contingency fund, in case some expenses come in higher than predicted during the bidding process, Stein said.

— *See also:* [Here's a Summary of the DPW Garage Feasibility Study Going Before Selectmen Monday](#)

If the town is able to approve the project this year, construction could start in early 2017 and be concluded that year, he said. If it takes longer, construction costs could go up, he said.

The plan will need to go through every Darien land use board or commission, Gentile said.

