



Town of Thetford Vermont

3910 Vermont Route 113 • P.O. Box 126 • Thetford Center, VT 05075
802-785-2922 • thetfordvermont.us

The advice of the National League of Cities (NLC), the Vermont League Cities and Towns (VLCT), the United States Treasury, and others advice that use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds should seek to make our community more resilient for future disasters. That the best uses for funds will emerge from community consensus, grow the grand list, and will not duplicate other available funds nor create ongoing obligations.

When asked to choose the top three categories for the use of funds, respondents most often chose:

1. Help create new affordable housing (43.27%)
2. Improve water and sewer in the five villages (33.24%)
3. Offset costs of road or bridge improvements (28.94%)
4. Repair, renovate, or replace the Town garage (27.51%)
5. Improve physical facilities at Treasure Island (24.64%)
6. Repairing and renovating the Timothy Frost Building so it's usable for community gatherings (20.63%)

Thetford was awarded approximately \$785,000 and has already committed \$258,000 to energy efficiency upgrades to the HVAC system at the Town Hall. Splitting the remaining money between these priorities will not provide enough funds for most projects to be successful. The board must choose how to distribute the funds among these available projects and others that have not yet been considered.

Using these broad topics as goals we have a few options available for projects to address them. Our Option 1 addresses the first and second goals, Options 2 and 3 address the fourth goal, Options 4 and 5 address the sixth goal, Option 6 addresses the third goal, and Option 7 does not relate to a goal identified in the survey. The fifth goal, to improve the facilities at Treasure Island, does not have a current project identified that relates to that goal.



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Option 1. Capacity Study

A study to determine the capacity for water, septic, conservation, and finance to support housing and business growth in Thetford.

The study can be tailored to focus on locations that are most likely to support development.

Pros	Cons
Supports stated goals of housing and water/sewer improvements.	
Unlikely to attract other financing.	
Relatively low cost.	

Estimated cost: \$7,500 - \$15,000

A capacity study Request for Proposals has been circulated already.

Option 2. Plans for Town Public Works Garage Improvement

Procuring plans for improvements to the public works garage. Before work can begin a decision must be made on whether to seek plans for repairs and/or improvements to the current garage, or new construction.

Pros	Cons
Supports stated goal to repair, renovate, or replace Town garage.	Without additional investment, there will not be any tangible results.
Unlikely to attract other outside financing.	We have a building fund.

Estimated cost: \$10,000 - \$75,000



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Option 3. Department of Public Works Garage Improvements

Committing to the avenue for DPW improvements and carrying them out. May include new construction, remodeling, land acquisition, or other expenses.

Pros	Cons
Supports stated goal to repair, renovate, or replace Town garage.	We have a building fund.
Will produce a tangible benefit to the town.	Cost is poorly understood at this point.

Estimated cost: Unknown

We have a very rough estimate that includes options for: repairing the building, replacing the building on the current site, and a new building on a new site. The cost of the third option is highly speculative because it does not have a location selected.

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services runs a grant program called Municipal Energy Resilience Program that could be leveraged for improvements that result in lower energy usage for the building.

Option 4. Plans for Timothy Frost Renovations

Plans for all repairs necessary to reopen the Timothy Frost Building as a public building.

Pros	Cons
Timothy Frost repairs were the sixth most popular use of funds.	Without additional investment, there will not be any material results.
Potential for use of the building and cost of repairs are getting worse without investment.	

Estimated cost: \$10,000 - \$20,000

The repairs/improvements to the Timothy Frost building should not be regarded as a new financial obligation, but the fulfillment of an obligation that Thetford already has. If investment to secure the building from further degradation is not made, it will result in a significant



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decrease in the value of the building and increased costs in the future. Any future use of the building will require some degree of repair and improvements.

Option 5. Timothy Frost Building Improvements

Carrying out the work recommended by the engineering plans for the Timothy Frost Building, or alternatively commissioning the known repairs and maintenance.

Pros	Cons
Timothy Frost repairs were the sixth most popular use of funds.	Bonding to support the work could be a more judicious use of funds.
Will result in a tangible product.	

Estimated cost: Unknown

The scope of the repairs/improvements will determine the cost of the project. Without some decision on that front the cost is impossible to predict.

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services runs a Building Communities grant program. A portion of the funds goes to Cultural Facilities and is likely a good fit for the Timothy Frost building once we determine its future use. Being able to describe its cultural impact will be a prerequisite of the program. The program provides up to \$30,000 and requires a 50% cash match. Vermont Community Development Program also up to \$100,000 for accessibility improvements to publicly owned facilities. There may be other qualifying grant programs.



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Option 6. Capital Project Planning and Reserve Fund Investment

Creating a capital improvement plan for public works. This plan will allow the town to better plan for future projects and stabilize the tax investment.

Pros	Cons
Indirectly supports "Offset costs of road or bridge improvements."	Without additional investment, there will not be any material results.

Estimated cost: \$20,000 - \$30,000

Capital improvement plans have been frequently awarded funds by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development Municipal Planning Grant program.

Option 7. Repairs at Town Hall

Town Hall needs repairs to its façade. The necessary repairs may be more significant than they appear.

Pros	Cons
Has a tangible outcome that everyone can see.	We have a reserve fund that could be applied to this use.
Not likely to attract outside funding.	

Estimated cost: \$20,000 - \$30,000

Regular maintenance and repairs are unlikely to be eligible for outside funding.



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Recommendations:

While a number of possible projects won't produce more than plans, those plans will be helpful to have in the future. Once we possess plans for a project we can arrange financing to see it through completion. Without the early plans we are unlikely to be able to take advantage of any opportunities that we may have in the future. The need for shovel ready planning has to be balanced against the general ARPA advice to avoid spending one-time funds on projects that create a new ongoing financial obligation.

The costs are unknown for the construction related options and will be broad estimates at best until the planning is completed for the Timothy Frost building and the DPW Garage. It is highly unlikely that we can afford to completely finance either project with ARPA funds, let alone two.

My recommendation is to select all or some of the planning projects (options 1, 2, 4, and 6) and carry them out. A conservative estimate of these projects totals \$140,000, this could be reduced through grant funds.

Then using the remaining funds for one large construction project (options 3 or 5). Funding the repairs to Town Hall (option 7) through regular maintenance channels.