**Work on new Horsham municipal building to start this summer**

An artist rendering of the planned Horsham municipal building to replace the existing, 60-year-old administrative offices at 1025 Horsham Road. The existing building is expected to be demolished later this year. [Courtesy of Horsham Township]

By Chris Ullery

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Work on the new Horsham administration building will start this summer and the new building should be operational next May.

Demolition of Horsham’s administration building in June will kick off work for a new municipal building planned to open by May 2019.

The new, 13,000-square-foot municipal building replaces the current 60-year-old administration building at 1025 Horsham Road, and is designed to fix accessibility and security issues of the existing building, township officials said Monday.

Township Manager William Walker said the new single-floor layout will include a central lobby with access to all departments.

Right now, there are at least three ways into the current building and a visitor might be directed outside, around the building and to another door to get to certain departments, Walker added.

Administration offices will operate in an 11,000-square-foot building, with a 1,800 square-foot mezzanine above for storage space, Jay Clough, founding principal of KCBA Architects, said Monday.

Clough is the lead architect on the project and said the design also addresses accessibility problems at the current building by removing stairs and leveling out the campus as much as possible.

Initial cost estimates for the new building — which includes upgrades on the campus for lighting, signage and landscaping — come to about $7.15 million, documents provided by the township state.

Council approved the final design plans and submitted land development plans for the campus in November 2017, but those plans also included two possible alternate projects the council must still vote on.

The community center behind the current administration building will need some masonry and canopy repairs, and Clough said his master plan for the municipal building would include those repairs and a new façade to match the police station and finished municipal building.

A former garage for the township’s Public Works Department could also be converted to a training facility for police.

The two alternate projects could would bring cost estimates for the entire project to $9.6 million, and Walker said he is reviewing costs and funding of the project to give a recommendation to township council next month.

Walker added his recommendation and a vote from council would come at either the regular Feb. 14 or Feb. 26 meeting.

Once work begins, township staff will operate out of a temporary office during the planned 11 months of construction, but Walker said the exact location is another council decision for February.

Walker said he expects the township will lease vacant office space during construction and public works might start moving staff into an undecided location sometime in March.

Construction bids for the municipal building are planned to be awarded in April, Walker said.

Construction will not effect the township police department located at the municipal complex.