

Questions and Answers: Fire Station #1

How did this come about?

- In preparation for the 2016 budget, where a number of asset management projects were pending for Fire Station #1, Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive analysis to determine whether or not those projects should proceed given the age of the building, or if consideration should be given to a renewal of the structure that was now 50 years old. Essentially, a major renovation or reconstruction.
- HCMA was contracted through an RFP proposal to complete an assessment and provide recommendations to Council. This assessment included stakeholder engagement sessions with staff from various divisions, code and structural engineers and consultants and a costing consultant.
- Four options were presented to Council for consideration.
- Council endorsed the consultants recommendation with 'Build New in Existing Location' for \$16.9M

What is wrong with the existing fire station?

- The existing fire station was built in 1967, and though it has had a seismic upgrade in 1999, it has a 43% deficit to the seismic requirements to the 2017 BC Building Code. Though the existing building would provide life safety to its occupants after an earthquake due to its prior seismic upgrade, it would likely suffer damage that would prevent its ongoing operation.
- Major infrastructure components are well beyond their life span or usage and are at point where a failure could have significant impact to the operations of the station.
- While a major renovation was one of the options, the building would still need to be rebuilt within 10 years.
- Maintaining the status quo would lead to higher costs over the life of the building. Initial capital investment in the near future would be quite low but rebuilding a new facility in 10 years would be considerably more expensive than building the same facility now.
- The higher costs along with the risks associated with the existing facility, up to the point that it is rebuilt, suggests that the renewal of the fire station sooner provides the best value over the long term.

Did the consultant look at any other sites?

- The consultants looked at other locations where a NEW fire station could be built.
- Modelling and analysis was completed and the current location provides very good coverage in the highest incident area of the City and with the greatest structure fire and social challenges.
- Moving the station further up towards NIC and NAC would provide better response to the Westwood Lake area, but would also result in a longer response to the performance

- objectives (6:00 minute response) into the highest response areas. (1/3 or 34% reduction).
- While other City owned and alternative sites were looked at, many of which were in close proximity to the existing fire station, the current location with exiting onto Milton Street was preferred.

Why is there an amount of almost \$17 million when there is no ‘design’?

- The \$16.9 million dollar is an order of magnitude cost estimate completed by Advicas Group Consultants Inc. that reflects costs of fire hall similar builds with comparable functional design components.
- This cost assessment allows for a degree of latitude for design and will have a contingency built in for a typical fire hall facility.
- There is a preliminary footprint design and stages that are incorporated into the cost estimates that includes not only the build, but also the demolition, temporary location and contingency.

What is the benefit of having resources move into the same building?

- Savings to reduced overhead from two separate buildings
- Currently, fire administration and fire prevention are stationed out of a City owned facility at 580 Fitzwilliam St (formerly, the old Library).
- Fire prevention and education are key components to mitigating risk and keeping our community safe. Having the fire prevention staff integrated with fire operations will streamline the effective prevention and education outcomes and programs to the public.
- Standard practice is to have a combined station with administration and firefighters in the same building.

Why is there \$127,000 for public art?

- As part of the costing estimates, there are line items put in that would fit requirements for a similar fire station project. In many communities, new civic facilities must have a component for public art, generally a designated percentage of the overall cost.
- This figure is merely a placeholder in the event that there is a design component required for public art.
- May provide opportunity for promoting arts and culture within the community is used.

Does this mean that a fire station in Hammond Bay isn’t going to be built?

- As part of the 10-15 year fire plan, every three years an analysis will be conducted that will review the demand for service along with the performance goals and objectives of all areas within the City. This will include areas in Hammond Bay, Westwood Lake and Jinglepot areas.

- The Station 1 rebuild is a separate and distinct project from any new growth or service expansion.

Is there any project management occurring?

- The City has engaged Deloitte to assist in developing project management templates for this project. This was a key finding in the Core review.

Have partnerships with other service providers been looked at?

- BC ambulance were part of some early preliminary discussions around the potential to lease space however they were in transition at that time and unable to commit to any long term planning at that point.

Will there be any increase to property taxes resulting from the \$17 million?

- Annual debt servicing for the borrowing will be funded from the General Asset Management Reserve
- The General Asset Management Reserve was created in 2013 to fund the future replacement or renewal of general fund capital assets
- Contributions to the General Asset Management Reserve are through an annual budget allocation from annual property tax revenues