

Potential Creston FIRE HALL replacement project

Our current Fire Hall was originally built 60 years ago as an *Overwaitea* grocery store. Then, 30 years later, the building was converted into our “Village of Creston” Fire Hall. A lot has changed in the last 30 years including the number of volunteers/staff; equipment sizes; expanded service provision; and, changes to legislation and training requirements. From our current Fire Hall we now provide services for over 8,000 citizens in the Town of Creston, the Erickson Community, West Creston and other surrounding areas. Importantly, the current Fire Hall no longer meets current building and fire code requirements in areas such as post disaster standards, air quality, provision of adequate washrooms and decontamination space, etc.

In early 2016, Town Council authorized a “Fire Hall Replacement” study to be conducted. The intention was to determine the feasibility of renovating the existing Fire Hall and the potential for new construction sites within the Town. Renovation of the existing Fire Hall was not recommended due to inadequate size of the current property, based on existing service. Now the Municipality has entered into a public engagement process for consideration of constructing a new Fire Hall. The goal of the engagement process is to build a common knowledge base upon which people can make an informed decision at time of Referendum. The public process is designed to:

- ✓ Provide information on the reasons a new Fire Hall is needed
- ✓ Ensure that a site which works for the community and the Fire Department is considered
- ✓ Explain the engagement process for the next 8 months which will include public meetings and Referendum
- ✓ Outline the 4 possible sites being considered for location of a potential new Fire Hall
- ✓ Answer any questions that individuals may have.

During the Creston Valley Fall Fair, held on September 9th and 10th, the consultant team and I hosted a 2 day open house in the Kootenay Room of our Recreation Complex. Approximately 500 people visited and the comments received were extremely supportive of the public process and the potential of a new Fire Hall. The majority of people selected one of two sites as a preferred possible location:

- Site #2 (Cook Street at 15th Ave. South located beside Extra Foods)
- Site #4 (810 Vancouver Street located at the intersection of Highway #3 and Vancouver Street).

I was very encouraged with the large number of participants at our first open house and the positive feedback that was received. Many people expressed appreciation for the inclusiveness of the public engagement process, which reaffirms the path we are taking leading up to Referendum.

Since many questions still need to be answered – preferred location, possible building design and cost estimates – it’s important for the public to stay involved in this public engagement process. The next public open house will be scheduled this fall, with further public meetings to be held in 2017- prior to going to Referendum in late 2017. Stay tuned for those dates! In the interim, I invite you to visit our new website: www.crestonfirehallproject.com to complete the survey and peruse posted information.

Visit me at my office in Town Hall (238 - 10th Avenue North)

Emailing me at ron.toyota@creston.ca , or

Calling me at (250) 428-2214 (extension 227).