

Outreach Communications and Key Messages for ASC Consideration

Version 3.0 - May 31, 2018

BACKGROUND: WHAT WHY AND WHO

- Following the unsuccessful borrowing referendum for construction of a new Fire Hall in December of 2017, Council appointed an Advisory Select Committee (ASC) made up of community volunteers, technical experts and elected officials to identify, communicate and consult on potential options, recommendations and action items.
- ASC community volunteers were selected through an application process designed to represent a broad range of community interests, experience and opinions. Of 24 applications received, 11 community volunteers were selected and a youth representative was invited to participate.
- The ASC comprises a diverse group of community members who have volunteered to review documents, information and presentations and make recommendations to Council for long-term Fire Hall solutions.
- Long-term Fire Hall solutions had to address associated fire protection services and meet the province's legislative/regulatory requirements and industry standards. For the ASC, this task involved consideration of renovations to the existing Hall or building new.
- To support the ASC, the Town engaged the services of [FireWise Consulting](#) for assisting with technical support and informed decision making. This support included:
 - ✓ Determining challenges;
 - ✓ Identifying deficiencies of the existing Hall;
 - ✓ Understanding of relevant provincial legislation, regulations, and industry standards;
 - ✓ Considering renovation of the existing Hall or building a new facility; and,
 - ✓ Considering options for the future.
- FireWise Consulting, a BC based firm, was selected due to their extensive fire service operations and policy experience in western Canada and beyond. Their insights and assistance in providing timely, accurate and relevant information serves as a foundation for the ASC's decision making.
- The ASC's recommendations result from a blend of expert analysis combined with information provided by community members and/or groups.

These key messages provide clear, relevant and consistent source of public information that reflect the ASC process and outcomes. This document will be amended as the process proceeds.

CURRENT SITUATION: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

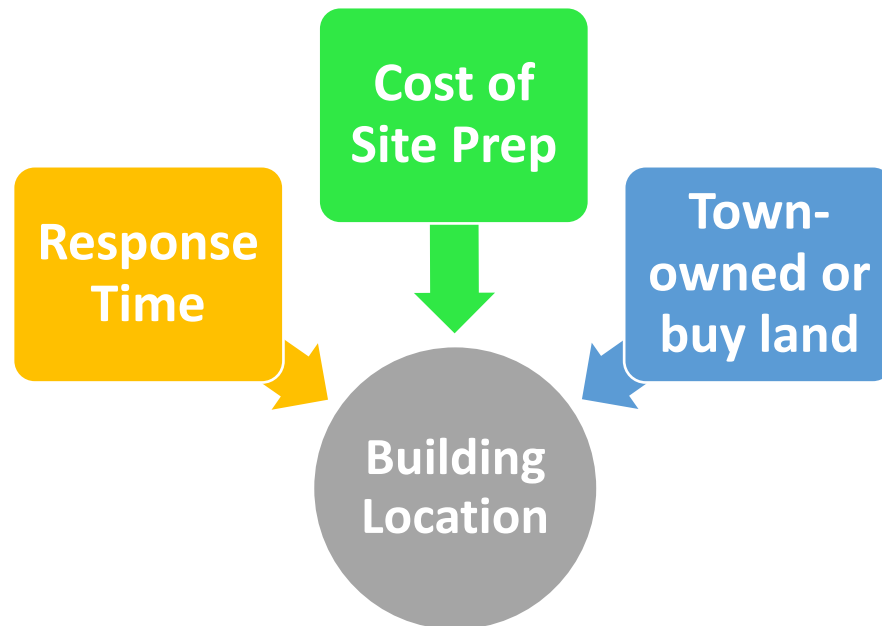
- To date, the ASC has reviewed and provided comments on technical reports and presentations to consider what is necessary to meet provincial legislation, regulations, current service levels, and industry standards.
- At this point in the ASC's work, a number of common points of understanding have been agreed upon:
 - ✓ Providing safe, sustainable and cost-effective fire protection is important to our community and is recognized as one of the key public safety services the Town provides.
 - ✓ Fire protection affects retention of current citizens and existing businesses, as well as being of benefit to community attraction.
 - ✓ Fire halls are built to a different standard than other buildings in our province. In addition, the BC Building Code is more stringent than similar regulation in most other provinces.
 - ✓ An architect is required by both legislation and the BC Building Code to design, develop and construct a fire hall.
 - ✓ Fire halls are required by regulation to provide for decontamination processes (the process of cleaning off the chemicals from fighting fires) of equipment and firefighters.
 - ✓ The Town has undertaken short term measures to relocate personnel from the Fire Hall and restrict exposure to contaminants; subsequently WorkSafeBC has issued three compliance orders related to the current Fire Hall.

For an overview of the final report on the FireWise Consulting report on the Fire Hall, <http://www.creston.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1896/Creston-Fire-Station-Report-Presentation---FireWise-Consulting>

CURRENT SITUATION: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR – Cont'd

- At this point in time, the ASC has made the following decisions:
 - ✓ The existing Fire Hall site cannot support a renovated facility to meet provincial regulations, industry standards, employee safety, space and parking requirements.
 - ✓ The long-term solution is the construction of a new Fire Hall.
 - ✓ A new Fire Hall must be safe and sustainable for both current and future generations – built to last for the next 50 to 100 years.
 - ✓ Of four sites reviewed, the Cook Street Site (Site 2) is the recommended site for a new Fire Hall. This site selection was made in consideration of site size, geotechnical considerations, centralized location, and other associated factors.
 - ✓ For details on the site selection options please refer to:
<http://www.creston.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1879/Siting-Materials-for-discussion-with-ASC---May2>

ABOUT SITING A NEW FIRE HALL: BUILDING LOCATION



Response Time

- Response times are crucial to saving lives and property. Site selection is one of the most critical decisions when considering a new fire hall in any community, particularly when the fire service depends on volunteers. For volunteer fire departments, fire fighters report to the hall from home, and then from the hall to the fire.
- The BC Building Code identifies a different construction standard and distance of building separation if a fire department's total response time exceeds 10 minutes.

Site Prep

- Many factors go into the true cost of site development. Land costs are an important consideration, but other elements also affect overall cost. While a property may appear ideal (such as the Town-owned property adjacent to the RCMP detachment) costs of utility relocation, site preparation and development, and railway crossing controls that would be required for Site 1 have resulted in the ASC selecting Site 2 as the best option.

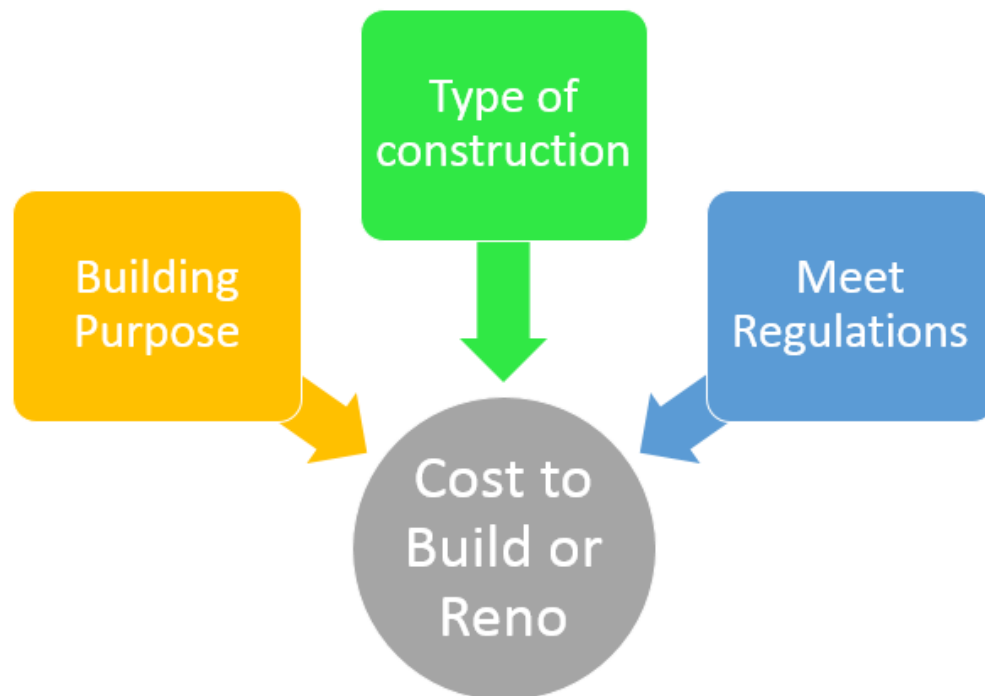
ABOUT SITING A NEW FIRE HALL: BUILDING LOCATION – Cont'd

- The assessment of options for a Fire Hall site in Creston included consideration of site development issues, adequate space to support operations, and centralized location as it relates to response times.

Land

- The ASC reviewed a siting study which identified four potential sites for consideration in the Town of Creston. These included: Cedar St. (Site 1), Cook St. (Site 2), NW Blvd. (Site 3), and Vancouver St. (Site 4). Cedar St. (Site 1) is currently owned by the Town of Creston.
- While any land used for a Fire Hall is not/will not be part of the tax base, the use of a new site provides opportunity to return the existing Fire Hall site or other Town-owned properties back to the tax base (dependent on a future Council decision).

ABOUT SITING A NEW FIRE HALL: PROJECT COSTS



Building Purpose

- Fire fighters are required to train extensively to be able to perform their duties effectively. Fire halls must be set up to support all sorts of training (including practical, classroom and online learning) to meet *BC's Office of the Fire Commissioner's Fire Service Minimum Training Standards for Structure Firefighters Competency and Training Playbook* at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/embc/fire-safety/playbook.pdf>
- Volunteer availability is a serious problem across North America, forcing fire departments to be innovative to keep their communities safe. A program like Creston's Work Experience Program (WEP) is one such innovation to address the shortage of volunteers.
- The Fire Hall must accommodate fire apparatus, fire protection equipment, shower and decontamination facilities, and adequate parking - to name a few of the requirements.

ABOUT SITING A NEW FIRE HALL: PROJECT COSTS – Cont’d

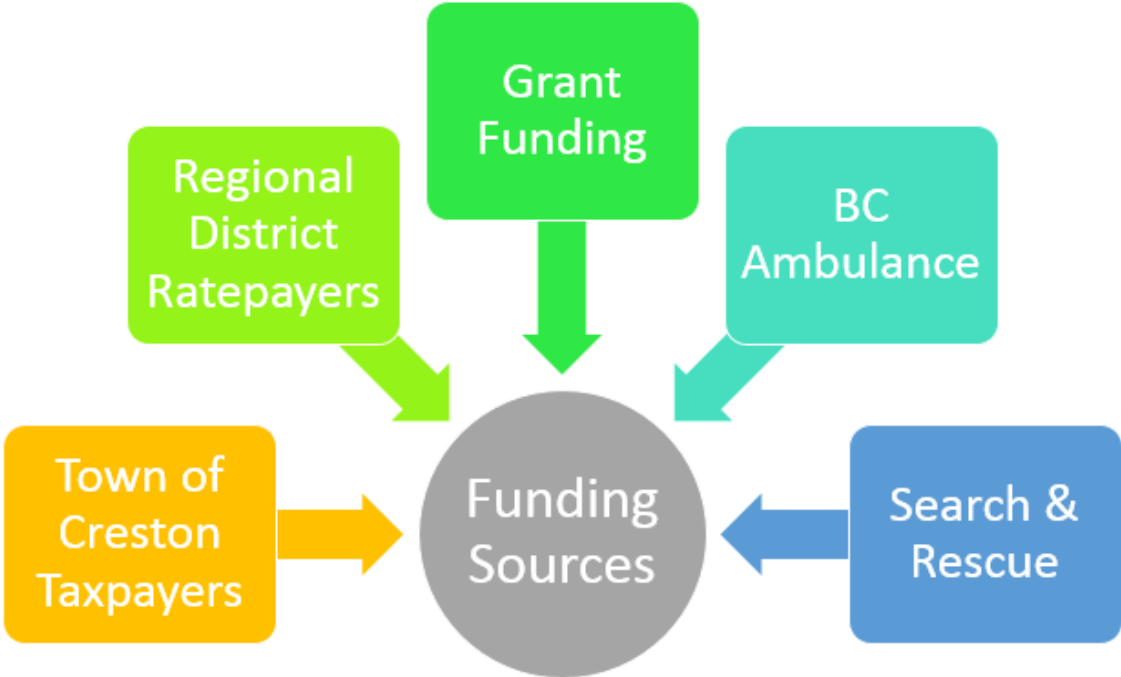
- The Fire Hall must provide dorm space for BC Ambulance as a partner (if they participate).
- The Fire Hall must provide kitchen and dining facilities for volunteer firefighters, staff, the Work Experience Program, and for the purposes of operating an Emergency Operations Centre both currently and into the future. Currently, dorm space is also required to maintain the Work Experience Program. However, in planning for the future, the availability of dorm space would benefit not only the Work Experience Program but the potential of career firefighters should they be required for the Creston Fire Department.
- Go to the following link to read the FireWise Consulting report for more information and insight into spatial requirements:
<http://creston.ca/DocumentCenter/View/1895/FireWise-Consulting---Final-Fire-Station-Report---May-8-2018>

Construction

- Fire halls are costly to construct. The Province understands that fire halls are essential to communities, particularly when the community is impacted by a disaster. The legislated BC Building Code requires fire halls to resist floods, windstorms, wildfire, seismic events and more. The BC Building Code requires professional design, strong construction and compliance to rigorous building standards, far greater than commercial or other types of buildings.
- Fire halls have a very long working life, frequently more than 50 years. For this reason, they are built to be adaptable to changes in equipment, staffing, training and regulations.
- The *2018 Altus Canadian Construction Cost Guide* states that BC project development costs range from \$315-450 per square foot, with costs outside of the Lower Mainland being typically 10-15% less. The Guide also provides costing comparisons which vary between provinces. Notably, BC construction costs are higher than Alberta’s.

Meeting Regulations

- Fire halls must comply with *WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*. The firefighting industry has come to better understand firefighting health and safety



impacts. As such, WorkSafeBC now recognizes work-related cancers. Fire halls are built to ensure equipment and personnel are isolated and cleaned properly for reducing risk to occupational diseases.

ABOUT SITING A NEW FIRE HALL: FUNDING SOURCES

Pieces of the Funding Puzzle

- The Town of Creston has received commitment from the Regional District as a long term financial partner for debt servicing of up to \$1.48 million of the eventual project cost.
- The Town is exploring a cost neutral partnership with BC Ambulance; in other words BC Ambulance would be financially responsible for their required space at no additional cost to the Creston taxpayers.
- The Town is committed to apply for relevant federal and provincial grants to help offset the cost of a new Fire Hall and continuing to build on its reputation for success. Since

2009, the Town of Creston and the surrounding RDCK Electoral Areas have been successful in securing approximately \$20 million in grants.

- Other community partners, such as Search & Rescue or others, may also petition to be part of the project in the future.

NEXT STEPS: COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND INSIGHTS

- Now that the ASC has reviewed historical, technical and expert reports, and other information on what needs to be done and why, the Committee has expressed a desire to seek input from the community. Considerations for receiving input may include inviting people to:
 1. Send their insights and ideas to Committee Facilitator Kerry McArthur at cfhasc.facilitator@gmail.com for presentation to the ASC.
 2. Drop off comment in writing to Town Hall, to be forward to the ASC.
 3. Attend an upcoming open house scheduled for late June 2018 (date to be determined) to learn more and provide feedback on ASC recommendations and options.
 4. Make a presentation to the ASC.
 5. Come and observe the next ASC meeting (check out www.creston.ca for the ASC meeting schedule).
 6. Request a presentationⁱ at an event, or to an organization, by contacting Committee Facilitator Kerry McArthur at cfhasc.facilitator@gmail.com

ⁱ Presentations will be made by a team comprised of the ASC facilitator, a FireWise representative and an elected official. Presentations will represent the recommendations of the ASC as adopted and/or provide foundational information considered by the ASC to date.