



**COMMUNICATIONS & CONSULTATION PLAN:
FIRE HALL & FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES**

ADVISORY SELECT COMMITTEE OUTREACH STRATEGY

JUNE 6, 2018

OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PLAN OVERVIEW

The Town of Creston has been working to meet the regulatory requirements and industry standards for the provision of a Fire Hall and associated fire protection services. In November of 2017, the Town held a referendum for a borrowing bylaw for a new fire hall, following a robust community communications and consultation campaign. The borrowing referendum was not successful and the Community Fire Hall Advisory Select Committee (ASC) was formed to assist with identifying, communicating and consulting on potential options, recommendations and action items for moving forward.

This Outreach Plan provides direction for communicating and consulting on proposed options for the provision of a Fire Hall and associated fire protection services. It also provides direction for soliciting ideas, insights and potential options from the community for exploration.

This plan consists of a variety of strategies and tactics that cover three phases.

- **Phase 1: Open House to Share and Listen – June 24/25**
- **Phase 2: Outreach Activities to Share and Listen – Summer**
- **Phase 3: Open House to Confirm What We Heard and Next Steps – Fall**

BACKGROUND

Project Purpose

To provide a Fire Hall that meets the legislated and necessary requirements that will service the current and future population of the Town of Creston and outlying contract service areas, Automatic Aid Agreement and BC Ambulance Services.

Committee Mandate

The Community Fire Hall Advisory Select Committee (ASC), consists of community volunteers who represent residents, businesses, institutions, youth, community groups and elected representatives.

The Committee's mandate is to bring forward recommendations to Town of Creston Council for long-term solutions to address deficiencies of the existing Fire Hall. This may include providing options on renovations or building a new Fire Hall that meets provincial regulations, industry standards and will meet community needs for the next 50 to 100 years.

To date, the ASC reviewed and provided comments on commissioned technical reports. To guide this work, a flow chart has been developed to map out the next steps (see attached) that includes:

- Considerations for short and long-term solutions.
- Confirming what is 'fixed' (i.e. required by regulations) vs. what is 'open' (i.e. options to explore).
- Identifying space required, new sites, construction or renovation considerations and options for funding.

A key part of the ASC workplan is to:

- Review options from experts on each area of interest
- Solicit additional input from the community on ideas or options for solving this challenge
- Solicit feedback from the community on proposed options for moving forward
- Options for moving forward may represent a blend of expert analysis combined with information provided by community members. As such, the Outreach Plan will seek to provide information, answer questions, solicit ideas and insights and present options for consideration as identified.

OUTREACH COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION GOALS

- Ensure continued public awareness of the need to address deficiencies of the current Fire Hall, as well as predicted requirements to meet the demands of a growing population and provide the public with factual information promptly.
- Deliver a professional, meaningful and productive communications plan.
- Provide opportunities for public information and feedback on options to address the deficiencies, to provide additional information, options for consideration or ask questions.
- Report out on outcomes and potential solutions.

TARGET AUDIENCES AND ASSOCIATED OBJECTIVES

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- **Residents, non-resident** property owners and community associations
- **Industrial, commercial, institutional ratepayers**
- **Media**
- **Town of Creston social media**
- **External stakeholders and partners**

Specific objectives for **external** communications are to: increase public awareness about the need to address the deficiencies of the current Fire Hall, as well as predicted requirements to meet the growing population; educate the public with factual information, and solicit additional input and feedback from the community on ideas/options.

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- **Community Fire Hall Advisory Select Committee (ASC)**
- **Town of Creston Mayor and Council**
- **Chief Administrative Officer**
- **Fire Chief**
- **Project leads and project team members**
- **Creston Firefighters Society**
- **All Town of Creston staff, contractors and consultants**

Specific objectives of **internal** communications are to: enable internal stakeholders to provide information about the project and answer questions/address concerns; respond to other internal

stakeholders' requests for information clearly and consistently; monitor what is being heard both informally through word-of-mouth; Identify potential issues and communicate options or rationale.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles for the campaign will help ensure a common understanding about the purpose and a consistent framework for assessing viability of options. Drawn from the Terms of Reference for the ASC, the following apply specifically to the Outreach Communications and Consultation Plan.

- The Town of Creston will act immediately to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the community and its firefighters
- The Town of Creston will develop options for meeting that objective with informed input from an ASC with technical experts, members representing key stakeholder groups, and local residents/property owners
- The ASC recommendations will meet the legislated and other requirements necessary to align with recognized industry standards
- The ASC recommendations will be reviewed by Mayor/Council, who will decide how to proceed
- The ASC recommendations will support the continuation of current service levels
- The ASC recommendations will be financially sustainable

LEVELS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In keeping with the International Association of Public Participation's *Spectrum of Public Participation*, this strategy seeks to incorporate the following levels of consultation with the community:

- Inform: Provide ongoing information to our community about the process, including opportunities to provide input and feedback.
- Collaborate: Work with a Community Advisory Select Committee to identify and explore options for consideration.
- Consult: Provide opportunities for our residents and businesses to learn about the recommendations and provide input and or feedback.

Mayor and Council will make the final decisions regarding any proposed recommendations.

TIMEFRAME

Given the current Fire Hall is not in compliance, this is a high-priority project. Accordingly, the Outreach Communication and Consultation plan will be implemented in June 2018 and run through until after the October 20, 2018 election and potential referendum.

KEY MESSAGES

Specific key messages will address the most important points including (See Key message document)

- Information about the ASC and the work done to-date.
- Promote opportunities for community members to ask questions and to provide ideas and insights about this community challenge to provide a fire hall and associated services for the ASC to consider.
- Solicit feedback on the proposed options.

OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATION STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

1. ESTABLISH OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

Online

- Build an email distribution list to use to circulate information to internal and external stakeholders.
- Encourage people to sign up for the Town's Newsflash feature to receive ASC Updates by email.
- Update the ASC website content to reflect the outreach, include room for event information.
- Create two social media posts to be posted Monday and Thursdays and encourage ASC to share on their social media.
- Use Facebook ads to extend reach of ASC Updates/information (e.g., to promote Open House).
- Monitor media and social media and educate as required by directing participants to TOC website, posting on Town's social media, including in the ASC updates, in person and or other means as appropriate.

Print

- Circulate ASC Updates in print at Town Hall counter, Community Board, Rec Centre, etc.
- Give Updates to Mayor to talk to his Coffee Talks.
- Give Updates to ASC members to hand out to their networks.
- Share Updates with community groups

In person

- Enable internal audiences to be informed about the process and content. Set up channels for all internal audiences.
- Orientation for upcoming Open House.

2. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE IDEAS AND INSIGHTS

Promote ongoing opportunities for the community to provide their insights and ideas on how to solve this community challenge.

- Include invitation to email and or present ideas to the committee as part of ASC Updates
- Report out using ASC Updates.

3. PROMOTE AND HOST FIRST OPEN HOUSE WITH SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (WORLD CAFÉ STYLE) TO PRESENT PROPOSED OPTIONS AND SOLICIT INPUT

Host two Open Houses with small group discussion to share the proposed options with the community and invite additional community insights. Dates: **Sunday June 24** (2:00 to 6:00 p.m.) and **Monday, June 25** (4:00 to 9:00 p.m.) in Creston Room at the Creston & District Community Complex.

- Use a combination of Open House display panels, an overview presentation, followed by small group discussions to share information and seek input and ideas.
- Prepare clear, concise and modest informative materials to support an Open House.
- Make presentations to key business, community groups and leaders about process, proposed options and Open Houses.

4. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROCESS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

Online

- Video interviews with ASC and experts.
- Create a weekly Q&A feature.
- Promote Q&A and opportunity to submit questions via ongoing channels.
- Contact radio media to arrange for interviews about the process, proposed options and outreach.
- Develop an online feedback form that will allow for frank disclosure of concerns and distribute accordingly.

Print

- Weekly Q&A column.
- Table top pop up displays for community events.

In person

- Use face-to-face events to engage community members and key stakeholders.
- Host Business Roundtable(s).
- Consider tours of any proposed facilities or sites.
- Prepare short presentation for community groups.

5. REPORT OUT VIA AN OPEN HOUSE AND IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS

Provide opportunities to report out to community and answer questions before a potential referendum and report out on next steps.