



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: March 8, 2022

From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Subject: **Fire Rescue Facilities Progress Update**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Council that the City has taken possession of land and the existing dwelling at 2406 Drought Road (Fire House #30), that will be used for Fire Rescue Administration, and to outline our next steps for that facility; and
- Update Council about staff's progress to replace Fire Hall #32, including our next steps with this operational facility.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Invest in Infrastructure

Foster Safety and well-being

BACKGROUND

West Kelowna Fire Rescue (WKFR) fire stations range in age from 31 - 55 years old (all built from 1965 to 1989). Several of these facilities require a wide range of repairs, renovations or replacement to ensure safety, accommodate ongoing operations and accommodate future growth in the City. As a very young municipality, West Kelowna must continue to address the absent and/or aging infrastructure across the City.

This report focusses on how the purpose of Fire House #30 will address the needs of WKFR *administration* that is required in order for Fire Rescue *operations* to function, and the efficiencies of having Fire House #30 as we prepare for the eventual replacement of Fire Hall #32.

A draft Fire Hall Facilities Update is attached that includes an at-a-glance map of all WKFR facilities and their overall condition (refer to Attachment 1). The update is intended to highlight the current state of our WKFR facilities and how Council continues to address the City's aging WKFR assets for administrative and operational functions specific to Fire House #30 and Fire Hall #32. It's important for the community to understand the purpose

of Fire House #30 *administration* in conjunction with the continued *operations* need to replace Fire Hall #32 that is overdue for replacement.

Fire House #30: Acquisition of 2406 Drought Road to Centralize WKFR Administration

On February 1, 2022, the acquisition of land and existing residential dwelling at 2406 Drought Road possession was completed to provide space for WKFR administrative staff that directly support Fire Rescue operations.

As outlined in the attached Fire Rescue Facilities Guide, the purpose of Fire House #30 is to:

- provide one central location for WKFR administrative staff that will result in increased efficiencies;
- eliminate administrative staff working at various satellite locations as we keep up with the growing needs of our community;
- centralize staff more rapidly as other fire hall facilities are built and/or renovated in the months and years ahead;
- reduces the cost to replace Fire Hall #32; and
- allow Council to determine what other uses are more suitable for the Harmon Road site based on the outcome of the Official Community Plan update currently underway.

Minor renovations are scheduled to begin and, once completed this summer, will provide workspaces for up to 12 WKFR administration staff and will serve the public for obtaining burning permits and public education. Renovations include elements such as:

- Installation of a reception area and workstations
- HVAC, flooring, washroom and paint upgrades
- Data, electrical and security installation
- Outdoor parking improvements and landscaping

There will not be any heavy apparatus located at Fire House #30. Once renovations are completed, public awareness will begin that this facility is open to the public from 8 am to 4 pm Monday - Friday, the purpose of the facility, benefit to the community and other benefits.

Fire Hall #32 Replacement Update

The existing Fire Hall #32 facility is overdue for replacement as it does not meet the needs of WKFR, including the essential areas required for apparatus and training. The pre-engineered lean-to-style steel building was constructed in 1971, with a small addition in 1976. The station was constructed to serve as a vehicle garage for two fire apparatus with small office space and common area for volunteer firefighters at that time.

Currently, this facility acts as both an administration building *and* manned operational fire station. As WKFR and Lakeview Heights community has grown over the past 40+ years, so have the demands on Station #32. Further, the efficiencies of centralizing and relocating fire rescue administration into Fire House #30 better enables Council to move forward with a more cost effective replacement of Fire Hall #32.

The 2012 Fire Hall Study formed a list of recommendations including the replacement of Fire Hall #32:

“The recommendation to replace this facility is because it currently is at capacity with very little to no room for any significant building additions on the current site. Additionally, the hall’s current structure is not conducive to any kind of vertical expansion without significant and costly upgrades. Therefore, in order to accommodate future staffing, department and facility needs it is recommended that the CWK investigate options to expand by decommissioning the existing building and build a new Fire Hall facility at another location.”

Additionally, the City’s Facilities Master Plan recommended that Fire Hall #32 be replaced due to its poor condition. And, over the past decade since the facility replacement was identified, the operational concerns have only increased:

- Emergency response vehicles are stored in temporary tents on the property.
- The facility is not accessible for employees or visitors with disabilities.
- There is little to no space for training, which is necessary to meet legislative requirements of staff working at this station.
- There is not enough space for administrative and fire rescue staff, equipment and apparatus.
- Among other structural deficiencies, it has heating and cooling issues and, in the winter to minimize drafts, the windows are heat sealed with plastic. The roof also leaks.
- The existing structure does not comply with BC Building Code’s post-disaster requirements or WorkSafe BC requirements related to the Health and Safety of the firefighters. There is no provision in place for emergency backup power.
- A temporary portable building has been added to the site to accommodate staff, resulting in an increased operating cost.

In 2020 staff completed a Space Needs Assessment for the new Fire Hall #32 and evaluated existing and future land options. The new Fire Hall #32 needs to be built close to the existing location to accommodate fire response times, fire underwriter/insurance requirements and other factors that constrict land options. Further, land options in the area are limited due to ALR land and covenants that will not allow a fire hall to be built in adjacent areas.

Now that the WKFR administrative function will be centralized across the City, the Harmon Road site previously identified for a future fire hall administration/operational facility has now become unsuitable for the function of a strictly operational Fire Hall #32. As the City is undertaking its Official Community Plan (OCP) update, the future land use as an outcome of the OCP update may guide Council as to a more suitable use for land at that location.

The concept design for the new Fire Hall #32 is underway. The outcome of that design will guide the financial model, and the next update for Council with the budget and concept design anticipated for late spring. Future updates will also include a look-ahead for public engagement on site design and local area use and function to ensure the City considers input through stakeholder meetings and with the public. Once staff considers Council and community input, detailed drawings will be completed in preparation for the construction phase.

The new multi-purpose building will improve Fire Rescue operations, reduce safety hazards for the health of firefighters, act as an Incident Command Centre as we look for more integrated ways to serve the local community in Lakeview Heights.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In anticipation of the eventual replacement of Fire Hall #32 and being in a position to fund the replacement Fire Hall, staff are recommending utilizing a portion of the new market growth and savings realized through the budget process.

The new market growth was anticipated to be 1.75% at the first reading of the 2022 budget bylaw in December 2021. This growth was updated in January by BC Assessment at 2.5%, which is an increase of .75%. This amount coupled with the savings coming from funding change for the Grant in Aid program would give Council a funding option for the project. Therefore we are recommending that Council consider putting these funds in reserve for their consideration when the project is ready to proceed.

REVIEWED BY

Jason Brolund, Fire Chief

Sandy Webster, Director of Corporate Initiatives

Warren Everton, CFO/Director of Finance

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

PowerPoint: Yes No

Attachments:

- 1) Fire Hall Facilities Update March 2022