

CUMBERLAND FIRE HALL PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions – November, 2019



WHY IS A NEW FIRE HALL NEEDED?

The current Village of Cumberland fire hall doesn't meet modern building standards and is at risk of collapse in a seismic event. The building is undersized and failing – making it a significant challenge to continue to meet the needs of the community. Some engineered stability work was completed in 2005 and 2018 as an interim safety solution, but it does not resolve outstanding structural issues, clearance for modern equipment and lack of space for personnel and truck preparation during an emergency response. This leaves poor conditions for local firefighters, whose critical work helps protect Cumberland residents and non-resident property owners.

The new fire hall would resolve outstanding operational safety and structural issues at the aging existing facility, while housing fire protection operations under one roof with option to expand in the future. The post-disaster building will also serve as Cumberland's main Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in the event of a major emergency. While the layout of the new building will be designed to withstand higher seismic forces than non-post disaster buildings. This efficient, structurally sound facility will meet the safety needs of our growing community and the firefighters committed to emergency response within the Village.



The current fire hall does not meet the space requirements for modern equipment.



WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF CUMBERLAND RESIDENTS AND NON-RESIDENT PROPERTY OWNERS?

Council is seeking elector assent to borrow \$4.2 million to build the new fire hall at 4382 Cumberland Road. The replacement of the fire hall has been identified as a high priority for the Village of Cumberland, with the security of the Cumberland community in mind. Currently, a design has been drafted, and the property is purchased and now the Village is looking to borrow the funds required for construction. To borrow money, local government must receive approval from its electors, who are ultimately responsible for the cost. To achieve that approval, Village of Cumberland Council is holding an alternative approval process (AAP) – also known by some as a counter-petition.



HOW DOES THE AAP WORK?

In an AAP, people who do not support the borrowing may sign and submit an "elector response form" in confidence indicating their opposition. The AAP form submission period is at least 30 days in length. If 10 per cent of the electorate returns a form, the borrowing cannot be approved.



WHEN DOES THE AAP PROCESS BEGIN?

The AAP form submission period for the Cumberland Fire Hall Project runs from Nov. 5 – Dec. 13, 2019 (4:30 PM). During these 30 days, electors who do not support the borrowing may sign and submit an 'elector response form' in confidence indicating their opposition. Forms are available at the Village office or by searching "Fire Hall AAP" on the Cumberland.ca website. The only persons entitled to sign the forms are the electors of the Village of Cumberland.





WHY AN AAP AND NOT A REFERENDUM?

AAPs are less expensive to administer than a referendum (outside of a local government election cycle) and can be completed within a shorter timeframe. Cumberland staff estimates an AAP process to cost between \$2,000 – \$5,000 while the anticipated cost of a referendum will range from \$15,000 – \$25,000. The shorter timeframe of this AAP could – if approved – offer the opportunity for the village to secure lower construction estimates.



The proposed new fire hall facility at 4382 Cumberland Road.



HOW MUCH WILL THIS PROJECT COST TAXPAYERS?

If approved, the \$4.2 million borrowed will result in an increase in taxes for the fire protection service – this will cover debt repayment and operating costs. Borrowed for 20-years at 4 percent interest, it's estimated this will result in a \$142/year increase on Cumberland's average-priced home (\$431,847). The amount will increase/decrease based on home value and interest rates. On the median commercial property this will result in a \$294 increase/year.

There is also the possibility of an additional \$50-70 parcel tax for the wastewater treatment project starting 2021 or 2022 depending on Council direction. An important note is that there will be a larger tax impact for properties that have higher assessments than the average/median assessments below.

\$4.2 Million Borrowing + \$75,000/Year Operating	20-Year Term 4%
2019 Average Residential Assessment – \$431,847	
Current Charges*	\$3,194.00
2020 Increase	\$170.00
New Fire Hall – Additional Charges**	\$142.00
Total:	\$3,506.00
2019 Median Commercial Assessment – \$306,150	
Current Charges*:	\$7,394.00
2020 Increase	\$461.00
New Fire Hall – Additional Charges**:	\$294.00
Total:	\$8,149.00

* Total includes 2019 taxes, utilities, parcel and frontage charges plus an estimated water supply parcel charge (expected in 2021). Average household is estimated to pay \$205 towards fire services as part of their charges currently. Median commercial is estimated to pay \$425.

**Total includes facility operating costs of \$75,000 per year and funding received by the Village from the Rural Cumberland Fire Protection Service.





ARE THERE ANY FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO THIS INCREASED COST?

The condition of the existing fire hall influences private insurance premiums. Rates are calculated from an inspection score given to Cumberland's fire service every five years by the Fire Underwriters Survey. This inspection score covers facility, equipment, training of firefighters and more. In 2018, despite scoring very well in other components such as its training programs, Cumberland's fire services received a reduced score due to the lack of suitability and reliability of the existing facility:

- The fire hall was noted to be in need of structural repairs. Foundation issues with the building exist, specifically portions of the fire apparatus bays. A review to repair/upgrade/replace the hall versus the fire hall is recommended.
- The fire hall bays are becoming inadequate for fire apparatus and personal protective clothing and equipment storage. Space was noted to be limited around each fire apparatus for fire fighters to safely put on PPC/E. (personal protective equipment)

A lower score for the fire service would increase the perceived risk for insurance as they calculate coverage.



This room is required for communication, storage and office space: Showing the lack of room in the current hall.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, IF THERE IS AAP APPROVAL?

Should the AAP result in support for borrowing; tender procurement will close before the end of December with construction to begin in 2020. This short timeframe is the result of much preparation work over the last six years.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE ISN'T AAP APPROVAL?

If 10% or more of eligible electors submit an elector response form, then the Council would not receive approval from electors to borrow funds to construct the fire hall. Council would then need to consider next steps, which could include proceeding to a referendum or revisiting the proposed approach for a new fire hall. Either way, the fire hall could not be constructed on the current timeline by borrowing funds.

A BRIEF TIMELINE TO DATE

2014-2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Council allocated \$250,000 to a fire hall construction fund. Final site of 4382 Cumberland Road determined after comprehensive site analysis reviews, geotechnical and service reviews, and research on emergency response times. Environment constraint assessment further identified no concerns for the selected site.	Land parcel purchased by the Village.	Conceptual design for the fire hall approved by Council, and budget for design and construction established. A public procurement process moves forward for the detailed plan, including public consultation.	Council approved the additional expenditure of up to \$125,000 to be funded through general accumulated surplus for the Cumberland Fire Hall Detailed Design and Consultation. MKM Projects Ltd engaged for preconstruction and construction management services.	Estimate for the new fire hall design approved by Council in January. Decision to proceed with AAP approved in October.

For more information about the Cumberland Fire Hall Project and the AAP, please call the Village office at 250-336-2291 or search "Fire Hall AAP" at the Village website: Cumberland.ca.

