

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: January 4, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Blake McIntosh, Acting Director of Civic Operations

SUBJECT: Update on the Substantial Completion of the New Fire Hall #1

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated January 4, 2021, from the Acting Director of Civic Operations, titled “Update on the Substantial Completion of the New Fire Hall #1.”

PURPOSE:

To advise Council on the substantial completion of the new Fire Hall #1 on Massey Drive and provide an overview of its uses, components, and timelines for completion, including move-in dates for fire suppression crews and equipment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This report relates to Council’s Focus Area regarding the prioritization of infrastructure reinvestment and renewal to ensure the delivery of critical recreation, emergency, transportation, and utility services.

BACKGROUND:

Located next to City Hall at 7th Avenue and Dominion Street, the city’s main fire hall is more than 60 years old. In 2016, Council received a Fire Underwriters Survey report, a Standards of Cover report, and a Condition and Functionality assessment indicating that Fire Hall #1 is no longer able to meet current standards as a fire and rescue facility, Emergency Operations Centre, and Fire Operations Communications Centre.

A replacement for Fire Hall #1 was proposed in 2017 to enhance service to more of Prince George. Research shows an eight-minute response time is critical for keeping fires contained to one room. After eight minutes, fires can spread into the rest of a structure, greatly increasing the risk of fatalities.

During a referendum in October 2017, residents voted nearly 83% in favour of re-building Fire Hall #1.

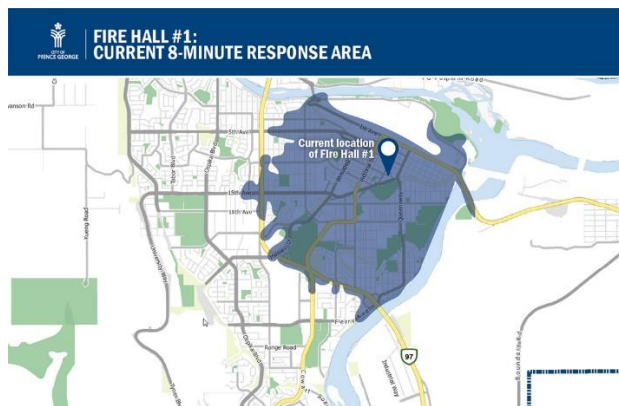
In 2018, the City appointed HCMA Architects and Planning of Vancouver and an engineering design team led by L&M Engineering of Prince George to design the replacement Fire Hall #1 at the new location in Carrie Jane Gray Park. A local company, IDL Projects, served as the general contractor.

In all, more than 250 people were employed during the construction of the new fire hall.

FACILITY FEATURES AND LOCATION:

The new fire hall is approximately 50% larger than the old Fire Hall #1 and has the capacity to house a functional and well-designed Emergency Operations Centre and Fire Operations Communications Centre.

The new location is much more central and will increase by 50% the area firefighters will be able to reach within an 8-minute response time as displayed by these graphics produced by the City in 2017:



Due to design elements including large door bays, the new fire hall will also be able to house modern firefighting equipment, which as seen in the photo to the right, the old Fire Hall cannot, and is built to modern, post-disaster standards, which is critical for the City's main emergency operations hub.

The building design itself will also serve to improve response times. Fire Rescue crews' workspaces and living quarters are located in close proximity to the fire apparatus. This means that when the fire alarm rings, the firefighters are able to quickly access their gear, board the fire trucks, and leave the building.

Another important feature of the new fire hall is that the building's design incorporates best practice in regards to industrial hygiene and decontamination technology for firefighters. Firefighters may face an increased risk of certain types of cancer due to their occupation. The new Fire Hall #1's design allows firefighters to decontaminate both themselves and their gear properly after they have been exposed to the products produced by fires. The day-to-day training and living quarters are also located as far away from the decontamination area as possible in the building.



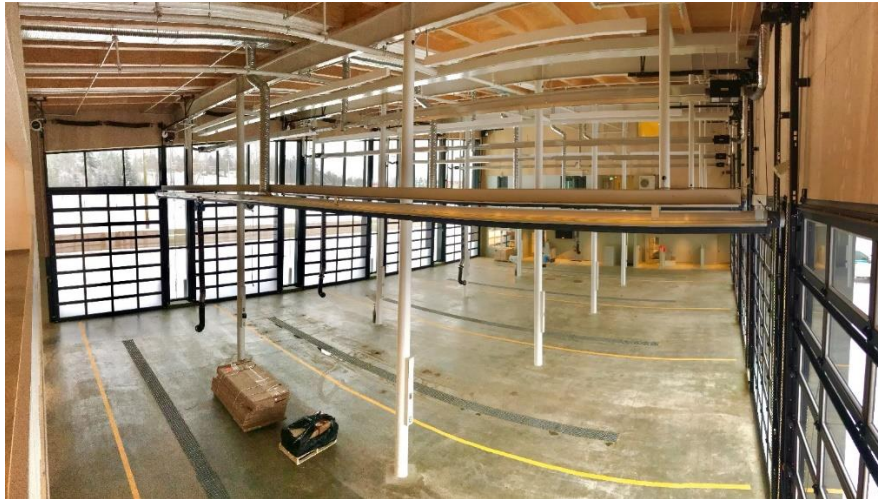
The building design incorporates space for the City of Prince George's new Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). This space will be used in the event of a major emergency in our city. This space is

multi-purpose and can be used as a large training area or meeting space. The design also incorporates a modern dispatch centre that will meet all our dispatch needs for years to come.

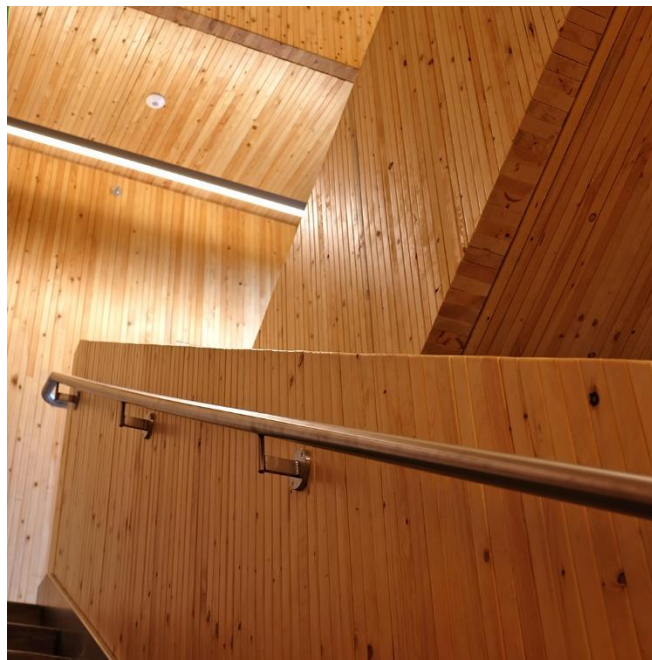
ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS:

One of the unique features of the building is the front entrance stairwell constructed from nail laminated timber. Crews used more than 100,000 fasteners and over 3000 pieces of lumber to construct this aspect of the facility. The large truck bay also accommodates modern firefighting apparatus and features a wood roof structure using laminated veneer lumber.

Panoramic image of the truck bay at the new Fire Hall #1



Front entrance stairwell at the new Fire Hall #1



The new Fire Hall is an example of post-disaster construction. A post-disaster building is one that is essential to the provision of services in the event of a disaster and is therefore built to be resilient enough to maintain operations following a disaster. This includes buildings such as hospitals, power generating stations, communications facilities, and control centers for transportation.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:

Construction of the new fire hall is now substantially complete. Construction fencing has been removed and administrative staff have moved into the building.

It is expected that fire suppression crews and equipment will move into the building during the third week of January and that the facility will be activated as the new Fire Hall #1 by the end of the month.

Landscaping is expected to be completed by the end of the summer, 2021.

The Fire Operations Communications Centre and Dispatch is scheduled to be operational in the facility by the fall, 2021.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

During the referendum in 2017, Council obtained voter assent to borrow \$15 Million from the Municipal Finance Authority for the development and construction of a new fire hall building to replace Fire Hall #1.

During the June 15, 2020 meeting of Council, Administration advised Council that Fire Hall #1 was roughly \$2 Million over its initial projected budget of \$15 Million due an underestimation of the space requirements for a modern Fire Operations Communications Centre. The site also contained deleterious materials and soils that were not identified in the initial geotechnical investigation, which were in need of remediation.

The fire hall's new location on the south side of Massey Drive near the intersection with Carney Street was already owned by the City and did not require a land purchase.

The chart below shows the financial costs for the Fire Hall #1 Replacement

CAPITAL BUDGET	
Approved Budget:	\$15,000,000.00
Cost to Date: (to Dec 18, 2020)	\$14,741,000.00
Projected Budget:	\$17,000,000.00

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

During a referendum in October 2017, residents voted nearly 83% in favour of re-building Fire Hall #1. The facility is now substantially complete and fire suppression crews and equipment will be moving in and the facility will be fully operational by the end of January. The new fire hall is approximately 50% larger than the old Fire Hall #1 and has the capacity to house a functional and well-designed Emergency Operations Centre and Fire Operations Communications Centre. The new location is much more central and will increase by 50% the area firefighters will be able to reach within an 8-minute response time.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Blake McIntosh, Acting Director of Civic Operations

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager
Meeting Date: 2021/01/11