

**REQUEST FOR DECISION 053-2019**

Title: Community Development Public Works Facility Upgrade

Date: 2019-09-03

Department: Public Works

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## **SUMMARY**

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY UPGRADE**

Upgrades to the Community Development Public Works facility are being considered to address code deficiencies, improve accessibility and provide more office space. The current capital budget includes \$200,000 for upgrades to this facility. The cost estimates based on our consultant's preliminary design is \$500,000 and a decision on how to proceed is required.

#### **DRAFT MOTION:**

Move that Council commit an additional \$250,000 to the Community Development Public Works facility upgrade to address code deficiencies identified and complete the renovations required to make the ground floor accessible and provide additional office space for staff.

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### 1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

### 2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Procurement Policy 140-001
- Approved 2019/20 Capital Budget

### 3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Council commit \$250,000 in additional funds to the project to address the code deficiencies identified and complete the renovations needed to make the ground floor more accessible and provide additional office space for staff.

### 4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- 2019/20 Capital Budget

### 5) DISCUSSION

A condition assessment report completed in 2016 identified some code deficiencies with the Community Development Public Works facility. As staff began planning to rectify these issues, we discussed options to make the facility more accessible and renovation options to provide more office space. Stantec was contracted to assist with the design stage of the project. The preliminary design was temporarily put on hold while the Town decided on the use of the RCMP space. With the decision to maintain the RCMP presence in their existing space, Stantec was asked to continue with preliminary design options for the CD/PW facility including additional office space and to include a preliminary review of the Rick Hansen Foundation certification requirements. This is also an opportunity to complete some of the work that has been identified in previous energy efficiency audits, with any outstanding recommendations that do not fit the current project scope to be completed through operations in coming years.

Stantec are recommending as part of the preliminary design that the code issues identified in the Hatch condition assessment report be addressed. In addition, in an effort to address the accessibility and space requirements, Stantec are proposing a more user friendly reception area on the ground floor, adding office space to the ground floor, renovating the washrooms and incorporating energy management/conservation measures where appropriate. Renovation to the second level are not included in the current scope of work.

The work is in the preliminary design stage and details will have to be finalized. The preliminary estimate to complete the work is \$450-500,000 with an additional \$100,000 suggested to address the Rick Hansen Accessibility Foundation gold standards should Council wish to proceed with this on this

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particular renovation. The Accessibility Plan (AP) adopted by Council earlier in the year set a goal of ensuring all new/major building renovations be done in a way to meet the RHFC gold standard. As noted at the time the AP was adopted, the Mgt Team was to go back through the Plan and identify areas where goals/actions were outside possibly outside the Town's ability to achieve. This particular renovation is one such example. It comes before Council before the full staff review of the AP has been completed, but staff felt it important to note that the recommendation in this report does not fully meet the current AP goal. The Town's Accessibility Coordinator will be at the Committee of the Whole meeting and can respond to any questions around this particular issue.

The estimated cost to address the code deficiency issues only, is estimated at \$200,000. The current capital budget includes \$200,000 for the Community Development/Public Works facility renovations and included \$50,000 for renovations to the RCMP space if we were going to move town staff into this space. There are no changes planned to the RCMP space so this funding could be used toward the Community Development Public Works facility upgrades. An additional \$250,000 is required to complete the code deficiency issues and the renovations to the ground floor of the facility. If the Rick Hansen Foundation certification is pursued Stantec are suggesting, we budget an additional \$100,000. This should be considered a soft estimate as staff have not obtained sufficient data on building cost impacts of an accessibility goal which exceeds current building codes. Note that a gold RHFC standard would generally exceed requirements of the building code.

The Community Development/Public Works renovations was included in the 2019/20 capital budget. The first draft of the 2019/20 CIP presented to COW last November included an estimate of \$300,000 to complete both the fire safety and office space revisions. The office revisions were intended to allow a first floor reception area as well as a few workstations/offices for some of the Community Development staff. The goal was to improve accessible access to the Community Development/Planning staff all of whom are currently located on the non-accessible second floor of the building.

After discussion during the 2019/20 budget process, Council gave direction to staff to look at providing budget dollars to renovate the RCMP for use by the Community Development staff and change the Public Works building renovation to only include fire safety improvements. This change resulted in the approved budget having \$50,000 for RCMP renovations and \$200,000 P Wks renovations providing an overall budget savings. It is important to note that Council committed to reviewing whether to have the Wolfville RCMP detachment report out of the new New Minas Facility or to have them remain Wolfville based offices. Ultimately Council decided to have the RCMP remain in Wolfville offices. This has required staff to go back and review the renovations that would be required at the Public Works Building to once again do both fire safety and accessibility improvements.

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### 6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As noted above, the approved funding in the budget totals \$250,000 for building renovations (\$50,000 at RCMP wing of Town Hall and \$200,000 at Public Works). Current estimates now show the combined renovation being carried out at the Public Works location to be \$500,000 before any consideration of the added changes that would be needed to achieve RHFC gold status. This requires an additional \$250,000 to be approved by Council.

As with other requests, Council's options for funding can range from all long term debt to 100% reserves and any combination in between. Although buildings would typically be candidates for long term debt, the work envisioned here is not such that it necessarily extends the useful life, but rather improves safety and accessibility. The use of the building is anticipated to change within the next 9 years, once the new Town Hall facility is completed (this could be a new building or a major renovation of the current Town Hall). Refer to the CIP, Year 9. Two of the issues which would argue against the use of long term debt are:

The Town has already put in place its capital borrowing requirements for 2019/20. This process, including having the Minister sign off on the borrowing, can take several months.

A portion of the renovations relate to what amount to temporary use changes. Staff are trying to improve accessibility for a Town Service (Community Development) in the immediate term knowing that the long term plan is to bring that group of staff into a new facility within the next decade. The Town strives to ensure debt funding is for terms no more than 50% of the useful life of an asset. It would be preferable to keep the Town's debt ratio capacity for larger projects with longer expected life spans.

Finance staff would recommend using Reserves to fund this additional project funding requirement. The original project was funded out of capital reserves and it is suggested that the additional funds required also come out of capital reserves.

### 7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

The Accessibility Plan recently adopted by Council specifically references the following;

- By 2021, ensure that all or most municipal facilities meet the Accessibility requirements (Schedule "C") in the latest version of the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulation. For facilities not completed by that date, have a plan in place to complete the work by 2025.
- Ensure that all new municipal buildings (including major renovations) meet the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Gold Standard.

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### 8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any changes to the level of service offered both during construction and because of the renovations will be communicated to the public as well as the staff using the facility.

### 9) ALTERNATIVES

The following options are provided for Council to consider with respect to moving this project forward.

Identify the additional funds in this fiscal year and proceed with the correction of the code deficiencies and renovations to make the facility more accessible and provide additional office space.

Proceed with the code deficiencies only this year and budget and complete the renovations next year.

Complete the code deficiencies only and not complete the renovations as planned

Not pursue Rick Hansen Foundation certification for this facility at this time – the building's long term use (after new civic complex completed) is not a public meeting place