

City of Maple Ridge

TO: Her Worship Mayor Nicole Read
FROM: and Members of Council
Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Proposed combined Maple Ridge Fire Hall #4 and Park site

MEETING DATE: November 7, 2016
FILE NO:
MEETING: Committee of the Whole

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A combined Fire Hall #4/training ground and Parks site in the Albion area has been planned since the mid 1990's. The project has been deferred a number of times due to other priorities. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the background on this project so that it can be advanced.

This report provides some history and describes its different elements. The growth that we have already experienced as well as the planned growth suggests that we move forward with this project.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That staff be directed to:

1. Retain a registered professional architect for the purposes of designing Fire Hall #4 and obtain associated budgetary construction numbers for further consideration and approval; and
2. Develop a neighborhood consultation program for the park site to align park development with the fire hall development; and further
3. Prepare and submit a rezoning application for City owned property at 23863 112 Avenue to provide for the uses outlined in the staff report dated November 7, 2016.

DISCUSSION:

a) Background Context:

A combined Fire Hall #4/training ground and Parks site in the Albion area has been planned since the mid 1990's. The project has been deferred a number of times due to other more pressing priorities. The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the background on this project so that it can be advanced.

The City purchased the property at 23863 - 112th Avenue several years ago. A map showing its location is attached. Given its size (4.06 HA) and location, it was earmarked for a combined Fire Hall/Neighborhood Park site since its acquisition. This property is centrally located, providing a strategic location for a fire hall and training ground in addition to providing prime accessibility to

adjacent neighborhoods for park uses. The property is currently zoned RS-3 with an OCP designation of park (89%) and conservation (11%). The property will require rezoning to accommodate the proposed uses.

b) Desired Outcome(s):

A vibrant and healthy community that is well serviced from both emergency services and parks perspectives is the ultimate goal. The proposed improvements will serve to satisfy both of these targets while balancing the overall strategies of maintaining fiscal responsibility and community resource requirements. Each component of this project is discussed below:

Fire Hall #4

The fire hall will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the composite fire department model. A successful composite model relies on community minded individuals willing to respond to fire halls as trained firefighters, to augment career fire department members. In order to do this, the fire halls need to be strategically located within proximity of the workforce, i.e. their residence. The time it takes paid-on-call firefighters to respond to their respective fire halls directly affects the timeliness of the response, which in turn affects fire ground outcomes. Stated simply, the further a paid-on-call firefighter resides from their assigned fire hall, the longer it takes for fire trucks to respond, resulting in potential increased losses.

A large number of paid-on-call firefighters, and career firefighters who respond back after hours live in the Fire Hall #4 response area. These firefighters are currently assigned to either fire hall number 1 or 2. This means that firefighters responding to alarms from their homes need to travel significant distances. The construction of the new firehall will address this. It is also reasonable to conclude that the potential for attracting future paid-on-call staff will improve. The construction of Fire Hall 4 will also support Fire Hall #2, providing the residents within the Whonnock area a higher level of paid-on-call response.

Fire Hall #4 may also improve the Firefighter Underwriter Survey (FUS) rating for the hydrant protected regions of the City. The City currently holds a Public Fire Protection Classification (PFPC) of 3 (out of 10) for commercial lines of insurance. The effect of constructing Fire Hall #4 may reduce the rating to 2 (out of 10) and this may reduce commercial insurance premiums. Hydrant protected areas are defined as properties that reside within 5 Km of a fire hall and within 150M of a fire hydrant. The addition of Fire Hall 4 will not only reduce commercial lines of insurance within the Albion area itself, it will also bring down the rating across the bulk of the City.

Fire Department Training Facility

Skills maintenance and development of firefighters is also a critical function of the fire department and can be described as one of its core competencies. The proposed training facility will allow both paid-on-call (POC) and career fire fighters the ability to train and hone skill sets needed to manage and contain emergencies within the community. Currently, no facility exists within proximity of the urban and protected growth response areas that meets these needs.

Fire department training is divided into three categories: Recruit training, paid-on-call firefighter training, and career firefighter training. While each of these training models target somewhat different end users, the single commonality amongst them is the need for adequate and appropriate space to conduct the training. Currently, the hands on portion of our recruit and

paid-on-call training programs are conducted at the Justice Institute of BC training facility located on 256th Street. The fire department has enjoyed the benefit of a long standing arrangement with the JIBC that allowed the use of their facility in negotiated exchange for some of our decommissioned fire trucks. While this arrangement was mutually beneficial for many years, the time has come where the JIBC has advised they can no longer uphold the arrangement as is and will now be billing the fire department for time spent utilizing their facility. The additional annual cost of this is expected to be in the range of \$175,000. This can be reduced substantially through the development of our own training grounds.

It should be noted that the proposed training ground will be a 'clean' training facility. That is to say, there will be no burning of solid fuels that create noxious smoke/smells. Clean burning propane training props that generate no obnoxious by-products are an alternative solution to traditional wood pallet burning props. While propane props do not provide for a highly accurate simulated training environment, it is an understood trade off when weighted against the health and well-being of citizens in proximity of the site. As well, the training grounds will be situated so that they minimize the impact to the surrounding neighbourhood. Live fire training exercises will continue to be conducted at the JIBC training facility on 256th Street.

Park Site

Parks are an integral piece of the community liveability equation. Park facilities within a reasonable distance to neighborhoods are necessary for healthy community living. The proposed combined use site dedicates a large portion (~1.0 HA) to community park use. This park will be strategically located within the central Albion area allowing for accessibility via multiple forms of transportation, including walking and cycling. The natural habitat of the Eastern portion site will be maintained with a walking trail incorporated that connects to the pre-existing trail network provided by the townhome development to the East. There exists opportunities to extend the combined use theme of the site into the design and functionality of the park. Early discussions and brainstorming with Parks staff has identified potential ideas for a fire department themed water park or outdoor fitness equipment being incorporated into the design. Community consultation as part of the planning process will undoubtedly uncover other ideas and demands for the space. Ultimately, an integrated community park that serves the needs of citizen stakeholders is one of the principle desired outcomes.

Information Technology Infrastructure

The proposed facility will also improve the city's IT infrastructure. Currently, the principle computer servers that support the city's information technologies are housed at City Hall. Over the past several years the demand has increased for computing capacity as has the need for physical space to house the equipment. The space that the equipment resides in is not designed to house equipment of this type. Challenges exist in terms of volume, weight, and cooling requirements. The proposed fire hall facility will include space to appropriately house the current equipment in addition to providing room for expansion as the city inevitably grows. This proposed server room will be connected into the existing city owned fibre optic cable network.

Development of this combined use site will provide the citizens of Maple Ridge benefits across multiple disciplines. Every effort has been put forth to consider both the short term and long term needs of the departments involved. It is anticipated that investing in one construction project that serves the needs of several departments will net fiscal synergies that will result in a high value proposition to the citizen stakeholder group.

c) Business Plan/Financial Implications:

Capital costs are to be funded from the Fire Department Capital Reserve while ongoing costs are to be funded through operating budgets. The Fire Department Capital Plan includes \$6 million in capital costs, to be funded through debt. Repayment of the debt would be from existing annual contributions to the reserve; these are already built into the financial plan. Whether \$6 million is adequate for the project will be determined through the design process.

Operating costs have been anticipated and are included in our Financial Plan.

d) Conclusion:

Recent development in the Albion area along with fundamental changes in training arrangements has identified the need for a facility of this nature. The proposed site incorporates not only important fire department infrastructure, but allows for the inclusion of valuable resources from both Parks and IT departments perspective.

Prepared by: Michael Van Dop, Deputy Fire Chief

Approved by: Howard Exner, Fire Chief

Approved by: Paul Gill, General Manager

Concurrence: **E.C. Swabey**
Chief Administrative Officer