Metchosin Fire Hall Project – Question & Answer Update #1

September 10, 2025

Planning is underway to address critical operational, structural and safety deficiencies in Metchosin's Fire Hall. Below are answers to questions about this effort, including those on:

- Longstanding inadequacies with the Fire Hall
- Process to date
- The current option being considered to address issues
- Financial matters
- Next steps

Q1: What are the different design classes (A-D) about?

The classes for construction estimates range from A (Most accurate) to D (Least accurate). These descriptions below are provided by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. The District received a Class D estimate from Hanscomb Engineering for Option 1A and 3.2,

Class A (Pre-Tender) Estimate

Based on completed construction drawings and specifications prepared prior to calling competitive tenders, this estimate shall be sufficient to allow a detailed reconciliation and/or negotiation with any contractor's tender submission. The level of accuracy shall be such that no more than a 5% design allowance is required.

Class B (Substantive) Estimate

Based on design development drawings and outline specifications, which include the preliminary design of all major systems and subsystems, as well as the results of all site/installation investigations, this estimate shall provide for the establishment of realistic cost objectives and be sufficient to obtain effective project approval. The level of accuracy shall be such that no more than a 10% design allowance is required.

Class C Estimate

Based on schematic/conceptual design and/or comprehensive list of project requirements, this estimate shall be adequately detailed and shall be sufficient for making the correct investment decision. The level of accuracy shall be such that no more than a 15% design allowance is required.

Class D (Indicative) Estimate

Based upon a comprehensive statement of requirements, an outline of potential solutions and/or functional program, this estimate is to provide an indication of the final project cost that will enable ranking to be made for all the options being considered. The level of accuracy shall be such that no more than a 20% design allowance is required.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2023/spac-pspc/P68-4-2-2023-eng.pdf

Q2: What are the concerns with the current Fire Hall?

The existing Fire Hall is outdated, does not comply with modern building codes, and fails to meet the requirements for a post-disaster emergency facility. These issues exist within the Fire Hall's two main components: 1) the **Administrative / Sleeping Quarters** building and 2) the **Apparatus Bay**:

- Neither component meets the requirements of a post-disaster building standard.
- Major seismic deficiencies exist in both components.
- Serious occupational health and safety deficiencies exist with ventilation, decontamination and gear storage. These and other issues put the building below the standards set out by WorkSafeBC and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Other issues include poor roof structures, inadequate kitchen and bathroom facilities, electrical and plumbing concerns and space inefficiencies.

Q3: What are the issues with the Admin / Sleeping Quarters?

Built in 1950s and 60s by volunteers, the Admin component is made of cinder blocks filled with cement, in what is known as an unreinforced masonry (URM) building. URM are among the highest risk buildings in terms of withstanding major earthquakes.

This was confirmed in a 2010 engineering assessment of the administrative building. The report stated that this building would **"collapse or partially collapse under**

- Allows for the continued use of the existing fire hall during the construction process, providing for uninterrupted emergency response.
- Allows for the potential reuse of the current buildings for non-emergency uses.
- The new site contains more space for movement of the fire apparatus, parking, training and other uses.

The advantages / disadvantages are further outlined in the May 2025 Building Assessment Report.

Q11: The site proposed for the new facility is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) – how is Council addressing this?

In order for the new facility to be built on this location, the District will be required to apply to the Agricultural Land Commission for either 1) a non-farm use for the land covered by the construction; or 2) a full removal of the municipal land parcel (4450 Happy Valley Rd) from the ALR.

A report on these options is expected in late September or early October.

Q12: Were other options assessed?

Yes. The June 2025 Building Assessment covered a number of options, including:

- New build on existing site with full demolition of existing facility.
- New build of the administration side on existing site with retention of existing apparatus bay.
- New build on adjacent ALR site with retention of existing apparatus bay.

These options were assessed against service needs, code requirements and existing realities. More information is available in JDa's Building Assessment Report.

Q13: How much could this project cost?

On August 20, 2025 Council reviewed cost comparisons of Option 1.A and an option that included a newly constructed administrative building and an upgrade of the apparatus bay, both in their current locations (identified as Option 3.2).

Construction	Option 1A	Option 3.2
Fire Hall	$11,244,700	$9,097,500
Temporary Facility & Demolition (Temp only for Option 3.2)	$424,800	$3,734,320
30% Contingency (Location, Inflation, Construction)	$5,184,800	$4,194,800
30% Contingency (Market Estimate Factor)	$4,928,850	$5,107,986
Total	**$21,783,150**	**$22,134,606**

These costings were done as “Class D Estimates,” which means that the degree of accuracy is “plus or minus 20% to 30%.” Based on the cost estimate reports, the recommendation was to estimate on the high-end, so the +30% was included in the cost above as “Contingency”. This level of cost estimate is common when considering projects at a conceptual stage, with advanced estimates coming as planning progresses. The estimates for options 1A and 3.2 were completed by an independent firm that specializes in building cost estimates.

Based on the estimates provided, Option 1A (full rebuild) was found to be $351,456 less expensive than Option 3.2.

Q14: Will the District need to borrow money?

No decision has been made about borrowing money to finance this project; however, the potential exists that this will be required.

Once the outcome of the grant process is known Council and staff will assess the best approach to financing the project, including the use of the District’s reserve funds, taxation, borrowing or other measures.

Two reports from District staff are of note:

- A review of the District’s reserves and finance options was provided on June 9, 2025. (see page 47).
- A detailed look at the implications of borrowing was presented on August 20, 2025 (see page 43).