

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** November 6, 2023

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Guillermo Ferrero, Chief Administrative Officer

**SUBJECT:** Community Hub Next Steps

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT Council:

1. Establishes a “Community Hub Steering Committee;”
  2. Approves the Community Hub Steering Committee Terms of Reference;
  3. Appoints the following to the internal Community Hub Steering Committee:
    - Two (2) members of Council;
    - Director, Engineering & Municipal Operations;
    - Director of Planning and Development Services;
    - Director of Financial Services; and
    - Community Hub Project Manager.
  4. Support the Chief Administrative Officer for the required time to complete the committee mandate; and
  5. Direct staff to post and hire a Community Hub Project Manager funded from Capital Reserves.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council’s primary strategic focus is the development of a new Community Hub, with the potential inclusion of Affordable Housing and a variety of community services within the same structure, aligned with Council’s Strategic Plan.

The idea for the Community Hub arose from discussions surrounding the aging and space-constrained building that was modified from its original purpose over the years and serves as a City Hall, for the past 61 years and has now outgrown its capacity to house new offices and provide adequate community services. This initiative aims to address the community’s current and future needs and could potentially integrate cultural spaces (e.g., libraries, galleries, theaters, and gathering spaces), active spaces (e.g., gymnasiums, indoor pickleball courts, basketball/volleyball courts, parks, and splash parks), activity generators such as commercial retail units, and could incorporate much needed affordable housing components into the proposed Community Hub.

This multifaceted, multi-year project requires oversight and the allocation of dedicated resources for its successful initiation and completion. Staff recommends establishing a specialized internal committee, including two Council members and key staff, to provide the necessary expertise and required ongoing attention for the project. Staff also recommend the hiring of added resources with a specific focus on managing this project from its inception through to its conclusion.

This committee will be responsible for delivering direct reports to Council to provide updates and seek direction, when needed. The committee will work in collaboration with Council's Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) as necessary, as the Community Hub may incorporate an affordable housing element, where input from the HAC would contribute to any housing related elements of the project.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

<b>Motion # &amp; Meeting Date</b>	<b>Motion Details</b>
2023-366 September 25, 2023	<p>THAT Council receive the corporate report dated September 11, 2023, from the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations, titled "Facilities Master Plan – Community Hub" for consideration; and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Endorse the asset repair and maintenance strategies outlined in the Facilities Master Plan for consideration as part of the 2024 Financial Plan process;</li><li>2. Endorse the financial and conceptual work necessary to develop Council Strategic Priorities of Community and Housing &amp; Land Use by moving forward with options for a Community Hub to replace the Evergreen Daycare, Library and City Hall and that this development work include investigation into the feasibility of incorporating civic services, with a seniors' centre, affordable housing units, daycare space, an arts centre and market commercial-retail space as options; and</li><li>3. Endorse an investigation into the sale of the Waterworks Yard on Buena Vista, housing the Waterworks Operation in expanded facilities at the Keil Street Works Yard, and using the net proceeds as a contribution towards a Community Hub</li></ol>

### **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

At the start of Council's term, strategic priorities and projects to be completed during this period were established. The strategic plan identifies the development of a Community Hub and Affordable Housing as the Council's top two priorities. At the September 25, 2023 Regular Meeting, Council was presented with the completion of the Facilities Masterplan by the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations. The Master Plan looked at the conditions of all City facilities and it developed the concept of a Community Hub further. Significant changes were identified for City Hall including seismic, accessibility and functionality issues. Renovations for seismic strengthening alone were estimated in excess of \$2M, leaving accessibility, space constraints and functional issues unresolved.

A Community Hub is a multi-purpose facility or location designed to serve as a central gathering point for a local community. These hubs are typically intended to provide a wide range of services and resources to the community, and they can vary in their specific offerings based on the needs and priorities of the area they serve. Common components of a Community Hub may include: social services, cultural and recreational spaces, community events, nonprofit or charitable organizations, affordable housing, retail and commercial spaces.

The idea for the Community Hub arose from discussions surrounding the aging and space-constraints at City Hall, which has served for 61 years and has now outgrown its capacity to house new needed offices and provide adequate community services. This initiative aims to address the community's current and future needs and could integrate cultural spaces (e.g., libraries, galleries, theaters, and gathering spaces), active spaces (e.g., gymnasiums, indoor pickleball courts, basketball/volleyball courts, parks, and splash parks), activity generators like retail establishments could incorporate much needed affordable housing components into the Community Hub.

Dialog Design, the facilitator responsible for completing the Facilities Masterplan, conducted initial visioning sessions concerning the Community Hub Concept in line with Council's strategic plan to advance this concept.

The following themes were summarized in relation to the major purposes that a new Community Hub would aim to fulfill:

- Consolidate City departments to enhance ease of access to residents and achieve functional improvements in administration and governance operations;
- Provide universal and safe access to various City functions that serve the residents of White Rock;
- Create a welcoming and rich public realm by incorporating cultural spaces (e.g. libraries, galleries), active spaces (e.g. parks, splash park) and forming synergistic relationships with other activity generators such as retail uses.

Centrally located staff in a Community Hub could better serve the community compared to the current situation where developers, for example, need to address their needs at both the City Hall building and the Engineering and Operations building. Several reasons underscore the need for a new Community Hub, primarily a severe shortage of space, compounded by a multitude of safety-related issues that commonly afflict a 61-year-old building. Currently, the City is resorting to temporary "patch" fixes to address the ongoing issues within the existing structures in the area, and the numerous challenges they present in serving the community. Further details regarding this can be found in the Facility Masterplan, which was presented to and adopted by the Council and is attached to this report. Previous council reports, attached to this report, outline serious seismic concerns with the current building.

Given the Council's directive to move this project forward, staff acknowledges that it will require the formation of a steering committee and the allocation of dedicated resources. The ultimate goal is to have the project approved and shovel-ready by 2025/2026.

Staff recommends the establishment of a steering committee, with its membership detailed in the staff recommendations of this report. In addition, staff proposes the hiring of a "Community Hub" project manager, with funding sourced from capital reserves allocated to this project, who will report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer.

The internal steering committee will actively work on the required elements in order to keep the project of a Community Hub on an active track. They will advise Council and make

recommendations. It is only Council who will make final decisions to be considered at open Council meetings. Examples of topics the steering committee would be advising Council on include:

- Site location and financial analysis/ramifications of different potential options/scenarios.
- Funding models.
- Budget considerations, grants, reserves, and different funding models.
- Public consultation.
- Hub components/features and recommendations on layouts.
- Building Design and configuration.
- Tendering and/or procurement processes.
- Any aspects of the construction that need recommendations to be considered.
- Liaise with Housing Advisory Committee.
- Any other items that Council would like the steering committee to evaluate and make recommendations.

The steering committee and project manager will closely collaborate with Council and other Council committees to advance the project and complement the efforts of other committees as they interact with the Community Hub project. Staff have drafted a terms of reference for the committee for the Council's consideration, attached as Appendix E. Should Council approve the recommendations in this report, staff will promptly initiate the search for a project manager, recognizing that this process may take some time to complete

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As of the conclusion of the 2027 financial year, the City anticipates setting aside \$8.9M for an affordable housing project and \$5M for the construction of a new Community Hub. Should the City identify a viable project that allows for the integration of affordable housing within the new Community Hub, these two amounts could potentially be combined, resulting in a total of \$13.9M available for the joint project by the end of 2027.

Funding for the recommended project manager's position would be drawn from these reserves. Following the creation of a job description, the expected annual compensation for this role is estimated to fall within the range of \$120,000 to \$140,000.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Deliberations concerning a Community Hub will necessitate a more extensive, community-wide consultation, which will be an integral component of the project plan. A successful concept will incorporate substantial input from both the community and the Council.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS**

A project of this scale demands the involvement of all city departments. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the membership of the steering committee encompasses key department directors. Additionally, an internal committee will be established to collaborate with the Community Hub committee, aiding in operational planning and procedures.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

The Community Hub will be constructed to meet LEED standards, which will significantly boost facility efficiency, resulting in reduced energy consumption and a subsequent decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The recommendations in this report align with Council's Strategic Priorities that are identified as high priorities:

1. Community - We foster a livable city with connected residents enjoying distinctive places and activities – **Objective - Develop New Community Hub.**
2. Housing and Land Use – We advocate for diversity in housing and practice balanced land-use planning – **Objective - Increase at and below market rental housing inventory.**
3. Infrastructure - We plan, build, and maintain infrastructure to enhance quality of life and civic service delivery, while mitigating and adapting to environmental impacts – **Objective - Ensure future infrastructure resiliency by making decisions through a long-term lens.**

### **OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES**

The corporate report seeks approval based on the previous council direction given to move forward with Council's strategic priority to develop a new Community Hub.

Council could decide:

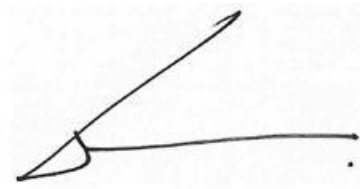
1. Not to move forward with the Community Hub and to remain with the status quo; however, continuing with inadequate facilities results in poor service to residents, and also exposes residents and staff to accessibility constraints and seismic safety issues. Additionally, the space and functional limitations of facilities affect the recruitment and retention of staff. Not moving forward would also take away an opportunity to implement Housing & Land Use and Community Council Strategic Priorities.
2. Any other direction.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Council has established clear directives for the upcoming four years, affirming the Community Hub and Affordable Housing as their top priorities for this term. Staff is actively advancing in alignment with this direction, proposing that Council establishes an internal steering committee to advise on the project and recruits for dedicated resources exclusively focused on the Community Hub.

With Council's endorsement of these recommendations, we are committed to progressing toward a "shovel-ready" Community Hub and Affordable Housing project by 2025/2026.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot at the end.

Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer

- Appendix A: Corporate Report brought forward to Council September 25, 2023 (dated September 11, 2023)
- Appendix B: Facilities Master Plan Update prepared by DIALOG Consultants dated August 29, 2023
- Appendix C: Corporate Report dated January 13, 2022, titled "City Hall – Seismic Report – 2020"
- Appendix D: Corporate Report dated January 27, 2020, titled "City Hall Seismic Report – Follow Up Costing Study"
- Appendix E: Draft Terms of Reference for Community Hub Steering Committee