



# 2022 ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS

## COWICHAN BAY FIRE HALL PROJECT

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### PUBLIC INFORMATION PACKAGE



**CBID**

EST. 1967

**COWICHAN BAY  
FIRE RESCUE**  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
4461 Trans Canada Hwy,  
Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1

EMAIL  
WEBSITE  
PHONE

aap@cbvfr.com  
cowbayfirehall.com  
250-743-7111

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FIRE FIGHTERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS ARE THERE FOR US WHEN WE NEED THEM.

Our volunteers serve 10,000 residents in Cowichan Bay and the surrounding areas, working out of a 1977 building that is no longer safe or compliant. Cowichan Bay needs a new fire hall to keep the community and our volunteers safe.



**CBID**

EST. 1967

**COWICHAN BAY  
FIRE RESCUE**  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Helping to keep our community safe since 1967  
[cowbayfirehall.com](http://cowbayfirehall.com)

The decision to pursue a new hall has been made after extensive exploration and study over many years:



## THE COWICHAN BAY FIRE SERVICE

Established in 1947, the Cowichan Bay fire service is run entirely by volunteers who drop everything to respond when they get a call. There are currently just under 30 volunteer fire fighters serving about 10,000 residents spread across parts of Cowichan Station, Koksilah, Cobble Hill, Arbutus Ridge, and other areas, along with Cowichan Bay (Electoral Area D).



Volunteer fire fighters give their personal time to serve their community. In addition to responding to emergencies, each year they take part in 50 training sessions, 50 maintenance sessions and countless additional training sessions, community activities, and charity events.



Not only do these volunteers fight fires, they are also often first to arrive on the scene of an accident or other medical emergency. The BC Ambulance service frequently dispatches volunteers because they are trained in First Aid and CPR and operate specialized medical equipment, such as an AED.

## MEET THE NEW FIRE CHIEF

Starting May 16, the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue welcomes its first ever full-time paid Fire Chief.

Chief Robert Grossman comes to us from Pemberton, where he has been the Fire Chief since 2014. Chief Grossman has been a fire fighter for 25 years, both in Alberta and BC. He spent 15 years with the Salt Spring Island volunteer fire department and he's looking forward to being back near the ocean. In his spare time, Chief Grossman spends time outdoors and restores old cars.

**"Fire departments don't just put out fires. We're there to do public education, help with emergency preparedness, conduct fire inspections, provide first response, and more. When it comes down to it, we hope to prevent more fires than we put out."**

What does a full-time Fire Chief do? A Chief oversees the operation of the fire department and ensures that the extensive requirements of the Office of the Fire Commissioner and Fire Underwriter are met. Welcome Chief Grossman!



## INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SAFETY FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

The new fire hall is planned for completion in 2025 and it will be built directly behind the existing fire hall to allow the fire department to operate out of the existing building during

construction. The new hall will be designed to post-disaster standards, meaning it will be able to withstand significant seismic events, and it will be sized to serve the area's growing population for a minimum of 50 years. Other key features of the new fire hall will be proper areas for decontamination after a fire to protect our volunteers from harmful carcinogens, proper storage

for Personal Protective Equipment, properly sized vehicle bays to accommodate modern fire trucks, and adequate training areas. As with most fire halls, there will be a commercial kitchen and some of the training areas will be available to be booked for community events.

## INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE RESCUE? PLEASE CONTACT US!

We are actively seeking volunteers. Volunteers receive extensive emergency response and fire safety training, and become part of our close-knit, supportive community. Contact us at [info@cbvfr.com](mailto:info@cbvfr.com) or (250) 743-7111.



MARCH 2021	SUMMER   FALL 2021	APRIL   MAY 2022	JUNE   JULY 2022	LATE 2022-2024	2024-2025	2025
Citizen advisory committee recommends that the Board pursue fire hall replacement.	Assembly of project team and construction costing.	Comprehensive community information campaign.	AAP to seek community approval for fire hall funding.	Design, development permit, and construction tender	Construction of new fire hall	Demolition and clean-up of original fire hall



# A NEW FIRE HALL FOR OUR COMMUNITY

The Cowichan Bay fire hall was built in 1977. Seismic reviews have found that the building may collapse in an earthquake and there is nowhere for volunteers to thoroughly decontaminate after exposure to harmful carcinogens. The longer we wait, the more it will cost.

Fire halls must meet WorkSafe BC requirements, BC Building Code and Fire Code requirements, and industry best practices such as those published by the National Fire Protection Association. The existing Cowichan Bay fire hall has not had any structural upgrades since it was built in 1977 and it does not meet minimum requirements. The long list of issues with the building includes:

- Significant seismic deficiencies (it may collapse in an earthquake)
- Non-compliance with multiple aspects of the current BC Building Code
- Undersized vehicle bays that require custom-built trucks at great extra cost
- Improper spaces for decontamination after a fire response, potentially exposing volunteers to harmful carcinogens
- Improper areas for cleaning and storing fire fighters' Personal Protective Equipment
- Lack of training space
- Lack of washrooms and showers

Continuing to work out of the existing fire hall is not an option. If we do not take steps now to build a new fire hall, the existing building might eventually have to be closed due to known risks to workers and volunteers. The longer we wait to build a new hall, the more it will cost.

## WHY IS FIRE HALL REPLACEMENT PREFERRED OVER RENOVATING THE EXISTING HALL? WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BUILD A NEW FIRE HALL?

The existing fire hall is no longer adequate. Doing nothing is not an option. The Improvement District mobilized a citizen advisory committee in 2020 to review all available information and make recommendations to the board. With respect to cost, the citizen committee recommended that:

**“Analysis of all the information made available to the Committee made it clear that the best use of resources is to replace the existing building. Options that looked at renovation and additions to the existing building required sacrificing some operational**

**efficiencies and were as expensive as building new.”**

The Improvement District has been gathering information about upgrade options for a number of years. A new hall is preferred over a renovation because: 1) renovation would not be much cheaper (if at all) and

would not address all of the issues, 2) building a new hall allows the fire service to continue operating out of the existing building during construction, 3) a new hall will operate for at least 50 years, while a renovation will only renew the building for a limited time.

**DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION**

**SAFETY IS WORTH THE INVESTMENT**

Our existing hall is at the end of its life. Funding to build a new fire hall will come from a loan that property owners will pay back over 20 years. The longer we wait, the more it will cost. Property owners served by the fire hall can support or oppose the loan in an Alternative Approval Process that is running June 2 to July 15, 2022.

A new fire hall is anticipated to cost up to \$16 Million, which includes permitting, engineering, total construction, contingency, demolition of the original hall, and interest payments during the construction period.

Property owners within the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue area would pay for the new fire hall annually through property taxes. The new fire hall would cost approximately \$43.10 per \$100,000 of assessed property value annually over 20 years, beginning when fire hall construction is complete. According to BC Assessment, as of March 31, 2022, the average residential property within the Improvement District is valued at \$820,477. Property owners with a home valued at \$820,477

would pay approximately \$354 annually towards the fire hall ( $\$43.10 \times 8.2 = \$354$ ). Owners of properties valued at less would pay less; owners of properties valued at more would pay more.

Approval from property owners to borrow funding is being sought through an Alternative Approval Process (AAP), a tool commonly used to determine whether there is community support for a project.

In an AAP, if less than 10% of property owners are opposed to an initiative, the AAP passes and the initiative (in this case, borrowing for a new hall) can proceed. Any property owner within the Improvement District boundaries who is a Canadian citizen and over the age of 18 is eligible to participate.

**Residents who support a new fire hall do not need to take any action.**

Residents are reminded that costs related to the fire hall are unavoidable. If we do not take steps now to build a new fire hall, the existing building might eventually have to be closed due to known risks to workers and volunteers. Information about the AAP, including important dates and how to submit an opposition form, is available at [www.cowbayfirehall.com](http://www.cowbayfirehall.com)

I support a new fire hall for Cowichan Bay because the [existing] facility is not serving the community's needs and it will only cost more if we wait.

Local Resident

I support a new fire hall for Cowichan Bay so I can continue to protect and serve this community to the best of my ability.

Captain Christina Shepherd,  
Volunteer Fire Fighter



**INVESTING IN A SAFER FUTURE**  
NEW FIRE HALL FOR COWICHAN BAY

[COWBAYFIREHALL.COM](http://COWBAYFIREHALL.COM)

**LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT THE FIRE HALL REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Community support is essential for us to build a new fire hall.

You can support this project by using your voice – telling others why you support a new fire hall for the volunteer fire rescue and helping clarify any misinformation that you hear. **Come to our Open House! You're invited to our informal Open House to learn more about the new fire hall and meet our new Fire Chief!**

**DATE** SATURDAY, JUNE 11  
**TIME** 11 AM – 2 PM  
**LOCATION** COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE HALL

Questions about the new fire hall and/or the Alternative Approval Process can be sent to [aap@cbvfr.com](mailto:aap@cbvfr.com).  
*Please note* we are a volunteer organization. We will respond to questions as quickly as we are able.



**COWICHAN BAY FIRE RESCUE**  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

ISSUED FOR DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



**COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE HALL**  
COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CBID)

**CIVIC ADDRESS:**  
4461 TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY, COWICHAN BAY, BC

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**  
Lot A, Plan V1P7845

**PROJECT TEAM:**

**PROJECT MANAGER:**  
Integrity Project Consulting  
Owen Davis  
T: 604.762.2037  
E: o.davis@integrity-consulting.ca

**ELECTRICAL:**  
AES Engineering  
Pelle Egnert  
T: 250.698.5312  
E: pelle.egner@aesengr.com

**CONSTRUCTION MANAGER:**  
Healthtrac Builders  
Colin East  
T: 250.585.0117  
E: colin@healthtrac.com

**ARCHITECTURAL:**  
homa  
Adam Fawkes  
T: 250.362.6650  
E: a.fawkes@homa.ca

**CIVIL:**  
Herold Engineering  
Tim Lutz  
T: 250.550.4875  
E: t.lutz@heroldengineering.com

**STRUCTURAL:**  
Workshop Engineers  
Davin Lewis  
T: 250.362.6363  
E: lewis@workshopeng.com

**CIVIL - ON SITE WATER:**  
MSR  
Karl Williams / Mike Seymour  
T: 250.479.5154  
E: karl@msrsolutions.ca

**MECHANICAL:**  
AME GROUP  
Cassidy Taylor  
T: 250.362.5999  
E: cassidy.taylor@amegroup.ca

**LANDSCAPE:**  
Kinship  
Kate Stasia / Chris Midgley  
T: 250.753.6993  
E: kate.stasia@kinshipdesign.ca

**SHEET LIST:**

000	COVER SHEET
001	GENERAL NOTES, LEGEND & ABBREVIATIONS
002	GENERAL
003	GENERAL
004	GENERAL
005	GENERAL
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007	GENERAL
008	GENERAL
009	GENERAL
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100	GENERAL

**hbs**

hbs  
hbs.ca  
1-800-363-3636  
250-698-5312

1000 Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay, BC  
V9P 7R8

**PROJECT:**  
COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE HALL

**CLIENT:**  
Cowichan Bay Improvement District

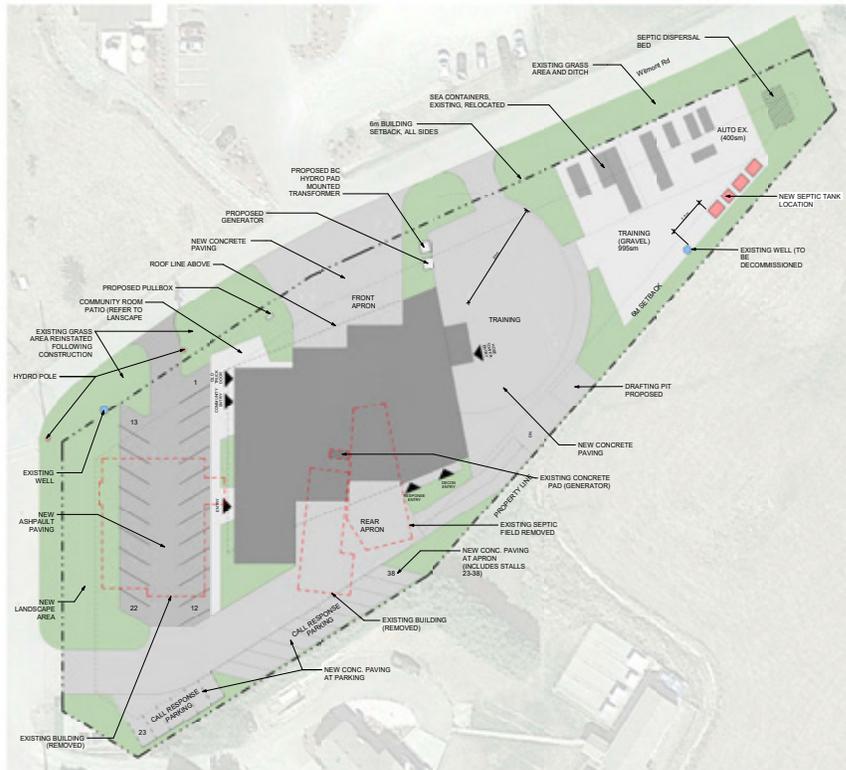
**DATE:**  
2022.08.19

**SCALE:**  
1" = 100'-0"

**DATE PLOTTED:**  
2022.08.19 10:47 AM

**PROJECT NUMBER:**  
22-0000-0001

**SHEET NUMBER:**  
A000



1 SITE PLAN  
1:500

**hbs**

hbs  
hbs.ca  
1-800-363-3636  
250-698-5312

1000 Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay, BC  
V9P 7R8

**PROJECT:**  
COWICHAN BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE HALL

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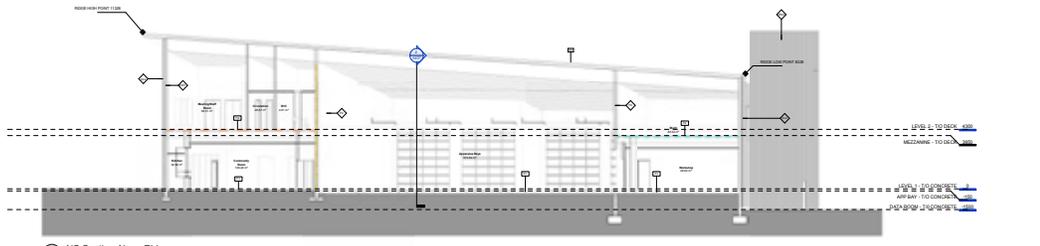
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22-0000-0001

**SHEET NUMBER:**  
A101

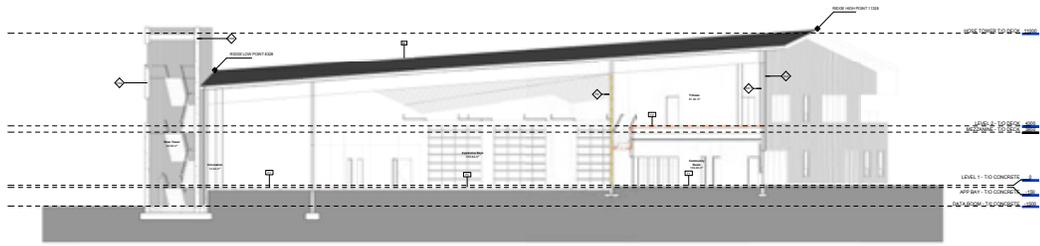




Client  
 Cowichan Bay  
 Project Name  
 Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Hall  
 Project Location  
 Cowichan Bay, BC  
 Project Number  
 A312



1 NS Section Along Ridge  
 1:100



2 NS Section  
 1:100

Project Name  
 COWICHAN BAY  
 VOLUNTEER FIRE  
 HALL

Client  
 Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
 6000 Cowichan Highway, Cowichan Bay, BC

Project Number  
 A312

Project Location  
 Cowichan Bay, BC  
 Project Number  
 A312

Project Name  
 COWICHAN BAY  
 VOLUNTEER FIRE  
 HALL

# OWNER RESPONSE FORM

**COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS**

**BORROWING TO CONSTRUCT A NEW COWICHAN BAY FIRE HALL**

**FIRE HALL CONSTRUCTION BORROWING BYLAW, NO. 107, 2022**

By completing this owner response form, I am indicating that I oppose the adoption of "Fire Hall Construction Borrowing Bylaw, No. 107, 2022", which authorizes the borrowing of up to \$16,000,000 (sixteen million dollars) to be repaid over a period not exceeding 20 years in order to finance the costs of construction of a new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall, unless a vote is held.

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Residential address \_\_\_\_\_

Choose one:

- I am an owner of property in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District who is:
  - A Canadian citizen
  - At least 18 years of age or older
- I am the authorized agent of a Board or Corporation, or the legal representative of a property owner who has died, become insolvent or incapacitated and who is eligible to vote in British Columbia, for the property located at

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*The Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District may proceed with the adoption of "Fire Hall Construction Borrowing Bylaw, No. 107, 2022" unless 448 owners sign and submit a completed owner response form to the Cowichan Bay Improvement District by the deadline.*

**DEADLINE FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2022 AT 4 PM**

<p><b>How to submit the completed form:</b></p> <p><b>MAIL TO</b> 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1</p> <p><b>HAND DELIVER TO</b> Cowichan Bay Fire Hall, 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1 (<i>note: use mail drop box if personnel are off site responding to an emergency</i>)</p>	<p><b>EMAIL TO</b> <a href="mailto:aap@cbvfr.com">aap@cbvfr.com</a></p> <p><b>SEND BY FACSIMILE TO</b> 250-743-7113</p> <p>If submitting this form by facsimile, please ensure that the transmission was completed.</p> <p><i>A person may not sign more than one owner response form in relation to this Alternative Approval Process. Additional information about this Alternative</i></p>	<p><i>Approval Process follows below and is available at the Cowichan Bay Fire Hall and at <a href="http://cowbayfirehall.com">cowbayfirehall.com</a>.</i></p> <p><i>Owners are required to submit their response on the form established by the Cowichan Bay Improvement District or an accurate copy of that form. If the form is altered in any way, it must be rejected by the Cowichan Bay Improvement District.</i></p>
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**CBID** EST. 1967 **COWICHAN BAY FIRE RESCUE** IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
4461 Trans Canada Hwy,  
Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1

**EMAIL** [aap@cbvfr.com](mailto:aap@cbvfr.com)  
**WEBSITE** [cowbayfirehall.com](http://cowbayfirehall.com)  
**PHONE** 250-743-7111

# ABOUT THE COWICHAN BAY FIRE HALL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

The Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District are seeking the approval of the owners through an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to adopt a loan authorization bylaw to borrow funds to construct a new Fire Hall for Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue at 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay.

The Cowichan Bay Improvement District proposes to borrow funds through the BC Surveyor of Taxes. The amount to be borrowed is up to \$16 million. The estimated yearly cost of the borrowing to each property is \$43.10 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, to be paid through taxation, and the term of the loan will be up to 20 years.

The new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall will replace the current hall, which was built in 1977. When construction is complete, Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue will be based out of a Fire Hall that is compliant with current building codes and meets the needs of a modern Fire Rescue Department serving a growing population currently numbering approximately 10,000.

## OWNER ELIGIBILITY

In order to sign an owner response form in relation to the Alternative Approval Process, a person must be an owner or representative of an owner of property in the area served by the Cowichan Bay Improvement District.

## AN OWNER MUST BE

- 18 years of age or older, and
- A Canadian citizen

## AN OWNER REPRESENTATIVE MUST BE

- 18 years of age or older,
- A Canadian citizen, and
- An authorized agent of any board or corporation that owns property in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District or the legal representative of any person who has died, become insolvent or is incapacitated and is eligible to vote in British Columbia.

## NOTICE | FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of section 26(a) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The personal information on this form will be used to determine whether owner approval has been received for Bylaw 107 and is considered to be supplied in confidence.

Personal information will only be disclosed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
4461 Trans Canada Hwy,  
Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1

**EMAIL** aap@cbvfr.com  
**WEBSITE** cowbayfirehall.com  
**PHONE** 250-743-7111



EST. 1967  
**COWICHAN BAY  
 FIRE RESCUE**  
 IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## NOTICE OF ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS COWICHAN BAY FIRE HALL PROJECT

The Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District are seeking the approval of the owners through an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) to adopt a loan authorization bylaw to borrow funds to construct a new Fire Hall for Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue at 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay.

The Cowichan Bay Improvement District proposes to borrow funds through the BC Surveyor of Taxes. The amount to be borrowed is up to \$16 million. The estimated yearly cost of the borrowing to each property is \$43.10 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, to be paid through taxation, and the term of the loan will be up to 20 years.

The new Fire Hall will replace the current hall, which was built in 1977. When construction is complete, Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue will be based out of a Fire Hall that is compliant with current building codes and meets the needs of a modern Fire Rescue Department serving a growing population currently numbering approximately 10,000.

The Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District will commit to borrowing the money through the adoption of "Fire Hall Construction Borrowing Bylaw No. 107, 2022" unless by Friday, July 15 at 4:00 p.m. at least 10 per cent (448) of the eligible property owners in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District indicate their opposition to the borrowing by signing an Owner Response Form. The Alternative Approval Process applies to the entire area served by the Cowichan Bay Improvement District.

The number of owner responses required to prevent the Cowichan Bay Improvement District from proceeding is 448. A report containing information about the basis on which this determination was made is included in the Public Information Package, which is available at the Fire Hall or online at [www.cowbayfirehall.com](http://www.cowbayfirehall.com).

**Starting on June 2, 2022, Owner Response Forms** are available between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday (unless staff are responding to an emergency) at Cowichan Bay Fire Hall, 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay, B.C. The form can also be downloaded from [www.cowbayfirehall.com](http://www.cowbayfirehall.com). The only Owner Response Form that will be accepted by the Cowichan Bay Improvement District is the one provided by the Improvement District, or an accurate copy of the form.

**Deadline:** Signed Owner Response Forms must be received by the Returning Officer at Cowichan Bay Fire Hall, 4461 Trans Canada Highway, Cowichan Bay by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, July 15, 2022.

**Forms may be submitted:** in person at the Cowichan Bay Fire Hall; between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday; by mail; by facsimile; or by email.

In accordance with the Cowichan Bay Improvement District Letters Patent as amended from time to time, you are eligible to submit an owner response form if you are: a Canadian citizen; age 18 or older on the day of submission; an owner of property in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District, an authorized agent of any board or corporation that owns property in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District, or the legal representative of any person who has died, become insolvent or is incapacitated and is qualified to be registered as a voter in British Columbia.

Only those people who own property in the Cowichan Bay Improvement District may submit an Owner Response Form. No person may submit more than one Owner Response Form.

This is the first of two notices to be published in the Cowichan Valley Citizen.

Joanna Winter  
 Natasha Horsman  
 Returning Officers,  
 Cowichan Bay Improvement District  
 4461 Trans Canada Hwy, Cowichan Bay, BC V0R 1N1

**TO** Trustees, Cowichan Bay Improvement District

**FROM** Joanna Winter, AAP Advisor

**DATE** May 25, 2022

**SUBJECT** Cowichan Bay Fire Hall Borrowing: Alternative Approval Process

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District confirm by resolution(s) that:

1. The Alternative Approval Process for seeking owner approval to borrow up to \$16 million for construction of a new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall take place between June 2 and July 15, 2022.
2. The Trustees appoint Joanna Winter and Natasha Horsman as Returning Officers for the Alternative Approval Process.
3. Each eligible registered owner of property within the Cowichan Bay Improvement District boundaries may submit one elector response form, regardless of the number of properties they own, in accordance with the Letters Patent and accepted practice of voting at Trustee elections and General Meetings.
4. For the purposes of the Alternative Approval Process for seeking owner approval to borrow up to \$16 million for construction of a new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall, the number of registered owners is 4,477, and the number of Owner Response Forms to be received for the AAP to succeed and the borrowing to be approved is fewer than 448, which is 10 per cent of the registered owners.

## ANALYSIS

### AAP Dates

The Alternative Approval Process is considered to begin on the day that the first notice of the AAP is published in the Cowichan Valley Citizen newspaper. The first notice will be published on

Thursday, June 2 and the second on June 9. The 30-calendar day minimum AAP period will therefore start on June 2. As the 30-day period is a legislative minimum, it is recommended that the Trustees endorse an AAP period beginning on Thursday, June 2 and ending at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, July 15 (44 days). Owner Response Forms will be accepted starting on June 2 until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, July 15. Forms may be returned by mail, dropped off at the Fire Hall, or emailed to aap@cbvfr.com.

### WHO ARE THE ELIGIBLE OWNERS?

The CBID Letters Patent state that an eligible voter is anyone who is over 18 years of age, owns property in the Improvement District, and lives in British Columbia. A number of individuals in the Improvement District are registered owners of more than one property. For the purposes of this AAP, and in keeping with CBID practice at elections for Trustees and at General Meetings, a registered owner will only be entitled to submit one Elector Response Form, regardless of the number of properties they own in the Improvement District.

Alternatively, the Trustees could decide that the registered owner(s) of each property are entitled to submit one response form per property. Should the Trustees make this decision, the number of total eligible owners and determination of the 10 percent threshold will change accordingly.

Note that s. 86(10) the *Community Charter* specifies that:

A person must not sign more than one elector response form in relation to the

same alternative approval process, and a person who is not an elector for the area of the approval process must not sign an elector response form.

Section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act* further states that:

A person may register as a non-resident property elector only in relation to one parcel of real property in a municipality or electoral area.

Staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs have advised that for the purposes of this AAP, those who may submit response forms are those who are permitted under the CBID's Letters Patent (as amended from time to time). Although the Letters Patent are silent on whether a person who owns more than one property in is entitled to more than one vote at General Meetings and Trustee elections, past practice of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District, taken together with the limit on response forms permitted under the *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act*, have led to the recommendation that the Trustees should permit the submission of one Owner Response Form per eligible property owner, regardless of the number of properties to which that owner holds title.

### **DETERMINATION OF THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE OWNERS FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE AAP**

The BC Assessment Roll for the Cowichan Bay Improvement District dated March 31, 2022, has been used as the basis for calculating the number of eligible owners. The roll lists 4,985 owners of properties in the improvement District. When owners of more than one property are removed, the number of owners remaining is 4,477.

It is acknowledged that this number is a close estimate, as some properties may have changed hands in the period since March 31.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs requires that the CBID document the manner in which the number of eligible owners has been determined, that the manner be reasonable, and that this report be made available on request.

Should the Trustees decide to permit eligible owners to submit one form for each property that they own, the total number of owners is 4,985, and 10 per cent of that number is 499.

### **CONCLUSION**

Approval for holding an Alternative Approval Process to borrow up to \$16 million for construction of a new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall was received from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on May 24, 2022. This approval was required before the Improvement District could proceed with the AAP.

Now that the AAP can take place, it is recommended that the Trustees of the Cowichan Bay Improvement District pass a single or separate resolutions as outlined in the Recommendations section above, in order to formally approve details related to the administration of the AAP.

Respectfully submitted,



Joanna Winter  
AAP Advisor

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE APPROVAL PROCESS BORROWING TO CONSTRUCT A NEW COWICHAN BAY FIRE HALL

### 1. WHAT IS AN AAP?

An Alternative Approval Process (AAP) is a way of seeking elector (in this case landowner) approval for a proposal. In an AAP, landowners are asked to consider the proposal and submit an opposition form only if they are opposed. If 10% or less of eligible landowners submit opposition forms, the AAP passes. If more than 10% of landowners submit opposition forms, the AAP fails.

### 2. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE AAP FAILS?

If more than 10% of eligible owners (448 owners) oppose this project, the AAP is deemed to have failed. This does not mean that the Fire Hall project cannot proceed. However, it means that the Improvement District will have to consider another process to build the Fire Hall. Options might include: funding the project slowly over time (making a new build difficult), undertaking a referendum in which all landowners would be required to vote, or holding a vote at a Special General Meeting to which all landowners are invited.

### 3. HOW MANY PROPERTIES ARE SERVICED BY THE COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT?

The latest property roll from BC Assessment, dated March 31, 2022, lists 3021 properties. This represents approximately 10,000 residents.

### 4. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROPERTY IS WITHIN THE COWICHAN BAY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT?

If you are within the Improvement District, this would be noted on a previous years' property tax bill. If you are uncertain, you can email your address to [aap@cbvfr.com](mailto:aap@cbvfr.com) and ask us to confirm.

### 5. WHY IS FIRE HALL REPLACEMENT PREFERRED OVER RENOVATING THE EXISTING HALL?

The Cowichan Bay Improvement District has been gathering information about upgrade options for a number of years. A new Hall is preferred over a renovation because: 1) renovation would not be much cheaper (if at all) and would not address all of the existing buildings' issues, 2) building a new Hall allows the fire service to continue operating out of the existing building during construction, 3) a new Hall will operate for at least 50 years, while a renovation will only renew the building for a limited time.

The Improvement District mobilized a citizen advisory committee in 2020 to review all available information and make recommendations about how to proceed. With respect to cost, the citizen committee recommended that:

*"Analysis of all the information made available to the Committee made it clear that the best use of resources is to replace the existing buildings. Options that looked at renovation and additions to the existing building required sacrificing some operational efficiencies and were as expensive as building new."*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## 6. HOW WILL A NEW FIRE HALL BE PAID FOR?

The new Fire Hall is anticipated to cost up to \$16 Million, which includes permitting, engineering, total construction, contingency, demolition of the original hall, and interest payments during the construction period. The cost could increase or decrease slightly depending on changes to interest rates. The Improvement District is seeking to borrow this money and repay the loan over 20 years.

Property owners within the area serviced by the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Rescue would pay for the new Fire Hall annually through property taxes. The new fire hall would cost property owners approximately \$43.10 per \$100,000 of assessed property value annually over 20 years, beginning when fire hall construction is complete.

According to BC Assessment, as of March 31, 2022, the average residential property within the Improvement District is valued at \$820,477. Property owners with a home valued at \$820,477 would pay approximately \$354 annually towards the fire hall ( $\$43.10 \times 8.2 = \$354$ ).

**Continuing to work out of the existing fire hall is not a long-term option. If we do not take steps now to build a new Fire Hall, the existing building might eventually have to be closed due to known risks to workers and volunteers. The longer we wait to build a new hall, the more expensive it will be.**

## 7. WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T BUILD A NEW FIRE HALL?

The existing Fire Hall is no longer adequate. Either a new Fire Hall or significant upgrades to the existing building are required. Doing nothing is not an option. There will be costs to area residents in order to maintain fire services for the coming decades.

As background, the Improvement District was created by the Province of BC in 1967 with the purpose of providing fire protection facilities to the area's residents. The Improvement District has a responsibility to maintain a Fire Hall that meets WorkSafe BC, BC Building Code, and Fire Code requirements and that reflects industry best practices (e.g. National Fire Protection Association guidelines).

## 8. HOW LONG WILL A NEW FIRE HALL LAST?

A new Fire Hall will be designed to last a minimum of 50 years.

## 9. TO WHAT SEISMIC STANDARD WILL A NEW FIRE HALL BE BUILT?

A new Fire Hall will be built to post-disaster standards, meaning that it will withstand significant seismic events. The existing Fire Hall was built to life-safety standards, meaning that it was intended to allow people to escape from the building, but not that it would be safe for ongoing use.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## 10. WHEN WOULD A NEW FIRE HALL BE COMPLETED?

If funding for a new Hall is approved in Summer 2022, construction of a new Fire Hall is anticipated to be complete in 2025.

## 11. WHAT DOES A NEW FIRE HALL MEAN FOR RESIDENTS OF ARBUTUS RIDGE?

While it may come as a surprise, half of the Arbutus Ridge community is located within the Cowichan Bay Improvement District and receives its fire rescue services from the Cowichan Bay Volunteer Fire Department.

Owners of Arbutus Ridge properties within the Cowichan Bay Improvement District are eligible to support or oppose the borrowing of funds to build a new Cowichan Bay Fire Hall.

## 12. HOW HAVE RESIDENTS BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE AAP TO APPROVE BORROWING THE FUNDS FOR A NEW FIRE HALL?

On March 9, 2022, the Improvement District board of trustees passed a motion committing to "...distribute comprehensive information to landowners in advance so that landowners are informed about the need for a new Fire Hall, options that have been explored, tax implications, and process timelines."

The Improvement District has made significant efforts to communicate with residents over the last few years leading to this point. The Improvement District has:

- Mobilized a citizen advisory committee to explore Fire Hall planning (2020-2021)
- Sent a newsletter update to residents explaining the issues and findings of the citizen advisory committee (January 2021)
- Focused heavily on community information leading up to the AAP, including a dedicated project webpage, posters and signage around the community, a detailed household mailout in late May/early June 2022, newspaper advertisements, a community open house on June 11, and notices/advertisements in various local newspapers.