

**REPORT TO PORT RENFREW LOCAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2009**

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**SUBJECT      PORT RENFREW FIRE / PORT RENFREW COMMUNITY CENTRE GRANT  
APPLICATION – PROVINCE OF BC TOWNS FOR TOMORROW PROGRAM**

**PURPOSE**

To seek support from the Port Renfrew Local Services Committee (PRLSC) for an application for infrastructure funding under the Province's Towns for Tomorrow grant program for some integrated works for the new fire hall and the existing recreation centre.

**BACKGROUND**

Port Renfrew and the Pacheedaht community have partnered to fund construction of a new fire hall for the greater Port Renfrew area. The budget may be adequate for construction of the facility, but may be inadequate to finish the facility internally as desired by the Port Renfrew Fire Department and to receive some exterior treatment to reflect the cultural heritage of the Pacheedaht and the flavour of the west coast.

The Port Renfrew recreation centre continues to be a challenge to operate owing to the cost of heating the facility. The centre is a key component of the community, serving as a youth drop-in centre, internet centre and emergency reception centre. Programs which will make improvements to the centre to reduce annual operating costs and to extend the life of the facility would be in the interest in of both Port Renfrew and the Pacheedaht community.

The Province of BC had announced it would receive applications by 16 January 2009 for infrastructure funding under the Towns for Tomorrow grant program. The program is intended to address the unique challenges faced by smaller communities in BC with respect to sustainability and meeting their infrastructure needs. It was intended to receive approval of a project under the program from the committee in December however the meeting was postponed due to weather conditions. Staff have submitted an application for the program by the due date and now wish to ensure the committee will support the application.

It is our understanding that projects will be evaluated based on their contribution towards reducing community greenhouse gas emissions, their public and environmental health benefits and the creation of a senior-friendly and disability-friendly community. The Capital Regional District (CRD) is entitled to submit one application only for the three electoral areas. CRD staff have presented a project to the CRD Electoral Area Services Committee and have received their approval to submit a CRD application for a joint project involving both the fire hall and community centre which will benefit the greater Port Renfrew community. The application has been tailored to meet as many of the grant program objectives and criteria as possible in an attempt to receive favourable consideration for funding under the program. If the application is accepted, the Province would fund 80 per cent of the program with Port Renfrew paying the remaining 20 per cent. As the project will fund a portion of the fire hall construction, the source of the funding for the CRD portion would come from the fire hall construction budget.

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The proposal will not reduce the funding levels required for the fire hall project, but rather will permit the funds available to be leveraged to ensure the fire hall can be completed as needed as well as to permit energy upgrades to the present community centre to reduce annual operating costs.

**Proposed Application**

The application includes the following work items, selected to meet the funding criteria under the grant program.

<b>Work Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
1	Joint ground source heat recovery system to replace conventional propane fired hot air systems for both facilities. Provide solar hot water system for each facility.	Two facilities share the same ground based heat system, technology reduces greenhouse gas emissions, provides more cost effective operation. Provision of solar water heating is seen as a demonstration project for the area.
2	Joint emergency power system to provide emergency power to fire hall and community centre.	Power outages of multiple days are common in Port Renfrew. Present generator provides only basic lighting for the community centre.
3	Provide new roof design for community centre, ensure windows for existing and new facility are energy star rated.	Current flat roof has limited insulation adding to heating costs, replacement with pitched roof and R 50 insulation and window replacement will reduce heat costs further.
4	LEED approach to design of new hall and upgrade to community centre for windows, lighting, parking area for community centre, insulation.	Applying the principles of the LEED program provides a cost effective energy efficient renovation reducing long term operating costs to the community.
5	Architectural design reflecting Pacheedaht First Nation cultural design elements	Recognition of the support from the First Nations community to the project. Promotion of acceptance of the project by the First Nation. Encouragement for First Nations residents to participate in the volunteer fire brigade.
6	Supports continued availability of community programs currently delivered at the community facility.	The Port Renfrew Health and Social Services Society coordinates a number of youth programs at the centre with funding from the various ministries and foundations. Programs include youth development (after school and weekend), CAP program for computer literacy, peer helpers and a kids camp in summer. The programs have a high attendance from the First Nation.
7	Completion of Fire Hall finishing and outfitting.	The community will be challenged to complete the internal finishing and outfitting of the fire hall with existing funds. As with all fire departments, the hall is the gathering and social centre which is necessary to maintain a healthy component of volunteers.

**Works - Description**

The funding available for construction of a new fire hall for the Port Renfrew area is limited. The intent has been to construct a weather tight shell, which will provide three bays of much needed shelter for the new vehicles and then to complete and outfit the facility as funds are available. Beyond basic vehicle storage, the fire facility, in the long term, is proposed to contain storage facilities, firefighters change out rooms, training rooms, administrative offices, bottle recharge centre and kitchen facilities. These facilities can be incorporated into the works at this time with financial assistance from a grant.

Given the facility is jointly funded by both the First Nations and Port Renfrew communities and there is an opportunity in the design to recognize this participation, the CRD will retain a designer to determine how the design can be modified to reflect the First Nations heritage in the Port Renfrew area. The close proximity of the fire hall to the community centre also allows similar design cues to be carried over to the community centre.

The present 300 m<sup>2</sup> community centre is heated by an aging propane furnace, circa 1970. The building is likely to have minimal insulation on the roof and walls befitting a commercial building of the era. To save costs, the building heat has been shut down when occupancy is not expected. While cost-effective to operate the facility, it has suffered air quality problems and growth of mould and mildew as a result.

The proposed fire hall has a floor area of 275 m<sup>2</sup>. Only a portion of the hall, that dedicated to firefighter support activities, would be heated to normal occupancy temperature, the remainder of the area can be heated only to ensure equipment protection. The proposal is to install a ground based heat pump system with a ground bed installed in the parking area adjacent to the community centre and air handling units installed for each of the two buildings.

To ensure heat loss is controlled, the community centre will increase insulation for walls and ceiling at the time of the redevelopment of roof lines to match the fire hall. The principles of LEED will be used to guide energy refits for the community centre, which would also include windows for the fire hall. The goal of the project would be to reduce the current carbon footprint of the facilities through good design and implementation of the suggested strategies.

As both facilities are key to the area during time of disaster both will be powered by standby diesel generator. The generator is expected to see considerable use as the area experiences multiple outages each winter for up to a week in duration.

Completion of the works as outlined will provide considerable relief from current operating cost increases for the community centre and will allow the social agencies operating the facility to concentrate more funding on programs and less on propane.

**Program Costs:**

Fire Hall construction	\$400,000
Complete interior finishing, fire hall	\$80,000
Joint facility heating system	\$170,000
Standby power system	\$40,000
Community Centre, roof, insulation, energy upgrades	\$150,000
Cultural design, construction, external façade (fire Hall)	\$50,000
Cultural design and construction (community centre)	<u>\$30,000</u>
 Project Total	 \$920,000
Grant, Maximum	<u>\$400,000</u>
Net Project Cost	<u>\$520,000</u>

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These costs are preliminary. The intent of the project is to work within the funding available for the project which may be less than the net project cost shown. Should this be the case, it is not intended to seek additional funds but rather to reduce expenditures on some items.

The CRD has opened discussions with the Pacheedaht First Nation to amend the completion date for the facility to 31 March 2010. As the hall is a joint project with the Pacheedaht, the First Nation will be polled for their support of the project. A letter of endorsement for the project from the Pacheedaht First Nation would be a significant addition to the application.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Port Renfrew Local Services Committee:
  - a) Support an application for infrastructure funding under the Towns for Tomorrow grant program for the project as outlined in this report; and
  - b) Forward this recommendation to the Pacheedaht First Nation for their consideration and approval.
2. That the Port Renfrew Local Services Committee direct staff to withdraw the application.

**SUMMARY**

The budget for construction of a new fire hall is not overly flush. Depending on construction costs, some finishing works internal to the building and some much needed mechanical support systems (air supply and standby power) may need to be postponed. The annual operating costs of the recreation centre for heating have been an ongoing concern for the committee. The receipt of a grant under the Towns for Tomorrow fund will permit the leveraging of a portion of the funding identified for the new fire hall to complete the hall in proper fashion and to undertake some innovative works which can be shared by both the new hall and the community centre which will add life to the community centre, reduce annual heating costs and provide standby power for full building and fire hall operation. The opportunity to incorporate a west coast and First Nation heritage component to both buildings will provide an attractive entrance to the community.

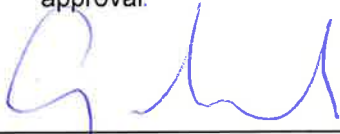
**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The project is expected to utilize all available funds from the fire hall project. It is not intended to increase taxes to pay for these works. The works will only be completed if a grant is received from the Province under the Towns for Tomorrow program.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Port Renfrew Local Services Committee:

1. Support an application for infrastructure funding under the Towns for Tomorrow grant program for the project as outlined in this report; and
2. Forward this recommendation to the Pacheedaht First Nation for their consideration and approval.



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