North Shuswap Multi-Use Building

What the Feasibility Study Is... and Is Not

A feasibility study is now underway

The North Shuswap Multi-Use Building initiative is currently in the feasibility-study stage.
The purpose of the study is to determine whether a multi-use community facility is needed, practical, financially responsible and sustainable over the long term.
The study is intended to provide the information needed for the community and potential partners to make an informed decision.

No final decision has been made

The feasibility study does not mean that construction has been approved.
At this stage:

- No final building design has been approved;
- No final construction budget has been established;
- No final funding package has been secured;
- No decision has been made to proceed with construction; and
- No long-term operating model has been finalized.

A decision to proceed would only be considered after the feasibility work is complete and the results have been reviewed by the appropriate organizations, funders, partners and community stakeholders.

What is being studied?

The study will examine whether a multi-use facility could address identified community needs, potentially including:

- Community meeting and gathering space;
- A shared commercial kitchen;
- Food-security and cold-storage capacity;
- Space for local producers and small businesses;
- Training, workshops and educational activities;
- Business incubation and local economic development;
- Community events and programming; and
- Emergency preparedness and community resilience.

These are potential uses being explored—not predetermined features of a final building.

The fundamental question

The central question is not simply:
“What should be included in the building?”
It is also:
“Does the North Shuswap need a new multi-use facility, and if so, what type and size of facility can the community realistically support?”
The feasibility study will consider whether the proposed functions respond to demonstrated gaps that cannot be adequately addressed through existing facilities, partnerships or other alternatives.

Existing facilities and the new fire hall

The study will also consider the facilities already available in the North Shuswap, including public, private and organizational venues.
It will examine:

- How existing spaces are currently being used;
- Whether there is unmet demand for meeting, event, commercial or community space;
- Whether existing facilities could be improved or used collaboratively;
- How the proposed facility would differ from existing venues; and
- How it would differ from the community-use or training space included in the new Scotch Creek/Lee Creek Fire Hall.

The objective is to determine whether a new facility would fill a genuine gap rather than duplicate existing capacity.

Financial questions that must be answered

Before any construction decision could be considered, the project would need a clear and realistic financial plan, including:

- Estimated capital costs;
- Site preparation and development costs;
- Potential grants and other senior-government funding;
- Community fundraising requirements;
- Contributions from organizational or regional partners;
- Annual operating costs;
- Staffing, utilities, insurance and maintenance costs;
- Long-term repair and capital-renewal costs;
- Anticipated rental and program revenues;
- Risks associated with lower-than-expected use or revenue; and
- Any potential ongoing financial responsibility for taxpayers or public organizations.

Projected revenue will not be treated as guaranteed revenue. The final analysis must identify how the facility would remain viable if revenues fall below expectations.

The former fire-hall property

The former Scotch Creek fire-hall property is being considered as a potential location. The property is publicly owned and has been identified as surplus to the CSRD's operational requirements.
Its future use is an important consideration. The feasibility process should examine the relative benefits and costs of:

- Retaining the property for a community facility;
- Selling the property;
- Using proceeds to reduce public debt or other financial obligations; or
- Considering other community or public purposes.

No assumption should be made that the property is automatically committed to the proposed project.

Community input is important

Community engagement is intended to help answer both the need question and the design question.
Residents, organizations, businesses and potential users have been encouraged to provide input on:

- Whether a facility is needed;
- What community gaps it should address;
- How often they would use it;
- What services or spaces would be most valuable;
- What alternatives should be considered;
- How the facility could be operated sustainably; and
- What conditions should be met before the project proceeds.

Community input will help inform the feasibility analysis. It does not represent approval of a final project.

What happens next?

The feasibility process is expected to examine:

1. Community needs and demonstrated demand;
2. Existing facilities and potential partnerships;
3. Possible building functions and development options;
4. Site considerations;
5. Capital and operating costs;
6. Funding and revenue opportunities;
7. Ownership and governance models;

8. Risks and long-term responsibilities; and
9. Alternatives to constructing the proposed facility.

The final report should present the findings transparently and may recommend:

- Proceeding with a defined project;
- Developing a smaller or phased facility;
- Pursuing partnerships or improvements to existing venues;
- Conducting further study; or
- Not proceeding with a new building.

The commitment at this stage

The current commitment is to undertake a careful, transparent and evidence-based feasibility study.

The goal is not to predetermine the outcome. The goal is to determine whether a multi-use facility is needed, what form it should take, how it could be funded and operated, and whether it would represent a responsible long-term investment for the North Shuswap community.