



FILE: 02-0890-03/25

REPORT DATE: January 27, 2025 **MEETING DATE:** February 04, 2025
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Samantha Maki, Director of Engineering & Operations
SUBJECT: Heritage Hall Accessibility Project Update

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Rescind their decision as captured in Resolutions A, B, and C for Item E.3.3 of the Minutes of the December 13, 2022 Public Council Meeting regarding the Heritage Hall Accessibility Project (i.e. installation of an elevator and construction of two washrooms); AND

 - B. Direct Staff to proceed with construction of a single-occupancy accessible washroom at the coat storage area on the second floor to help improve accessibility at Heritage Hall; OR

 - C. Other.
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PURPOSE

To obtain council direction regarding the Heritage Hall Accessibility Project (i.e. installation of an elevator and construction of two washrooms), considering the newly obtained RFP pricing and City sprinklering requirements.

Information Report Decision Report Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

Concerns were previously voiced over the existing stairwell lift at Heritage Hall either being broken or functioning improperly. The equipment has been inspected and continues to operate with no technical issues. The 550lb capacity is considered to be at the higher end for stairwell lift equipment and the concerns are likely related to user-error. To enhance the accessibility of Heritage Hall, two options were previously examined and presented to Council: interior vertical lift or exterior ramp.

During the 2022 Business Planning, Council directed Staff to exclude the exterior ramp option primarily due to inconvenience/route, exposure to the elements, longevity, and maintenance requirements and to review elevator options further. Council further directed staff to examine the feasibility of adding accessible washrooms on the second floor.

During the 2023 Business Planning, Staff recommended installation of a ThyssenKrupp Elevator within the south stairwell mainly due to its capacity, automatic features, space availability and suitability for equipment movements. Further, to improve the accessibility and functionality of the building, Staff also recommended construction of two single-occupancy washrooms on the second floor (Figure 1). Council approved the Project with a budget of \$561,250 funded from the General Facilities Reserve.

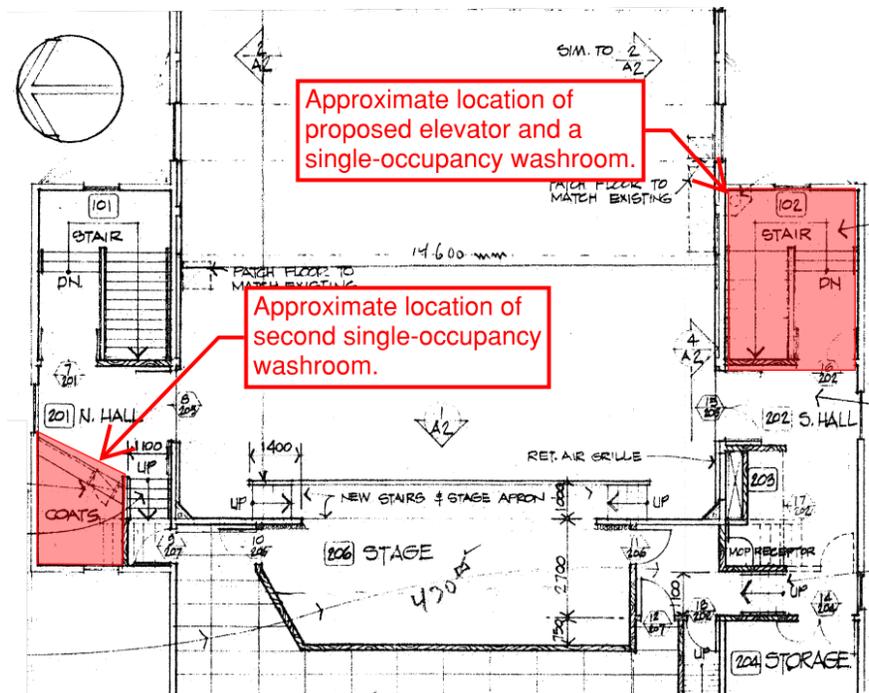


Figure 1 - Partial Second Floor Plan at Heritage Hall

Analysis:

In 2023, Staff retained ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. (ISL) to prepare detailed designs for the Project, building on the previous feasibility memo. In early November 2024, the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the construction services related to the project was posted on BC Bid, and upon closing the City received four proposals. The base construction costs included in the proposals varied from \$478K to \$795K (excluding consulting, contingency and sprinklering). When considering the lowest submitted construction pricing of \$478k and factoring in other project costs, such as consulting fees, contingency, and other components, the estimated overall project cost is approximately \$890K, which is approximately 1.60 times greater than the previously established Project budget of \$561,250. It is important to note that the overall project cost of \$890K does not include any additional funds required for installation of fire sprinklers throughout the building (see “Fire Sprinkler Requirements” section below for further information).

It is Staff’s evaluation that the higher Project cost is due to multiple reasons, including but not limited to:

- Escalation of construction costs from when the budget was established;
- Comprehensive shoring requirements that were not known prior to design development, which includes underpinning of the existing foundations and shoring of the excavation before the new foundations can be poured to support the hoistway;
- Unanticipated comprehensive upgrades related to certain base building components; and
- Premium pricing due to complexity of the scope.

Fire Sprinkler Requirements

In accordance with the City’s current Building Bylaw No. 2131, 2003, considering the lowest received base construction cost associated with the project exceeds 25% of the current assessed value (\$124k) of the existing building, installation of a fire sprinkler system throughout the entire building will be required. This requirement is beyond what the BC Building Code requires, but is intended to complement City’s fire fighting efforts. These additional sprinkler requirements were implemented into the City’s Building Bylaw before the provincial Building Act changed to prohibit local governments from regulating restricted matters, such as fire sprinklers. If the City wanted to modify these requirements at all, legislation would require the complete removal – meaning fewer buildings would trigger the need for sprinklers.

The additional work associated with sprinklering the building is not captured within the overall project cost of \$890K presented above, and additional funds will be required to cover this scope as well. The estimated cost based on the received proposals varied widely (average of \$300k), suggesting various assumptions and unclear scope by the proponents.

Grants

Staff explored several grant opportunities; however, the Project was not eligible for majority of the grants available. Staff applied to a federal grant that provides up to \$125,000, and the application is currently under assessment. Even if this grant application is successful, the funds aren't adequate to cover the difference between the established budget and the estimated overall project cost, and any additional funds required for installation of the fire sprinkler system.

Assessment

Based on the pricing received relative to the established budget, and considerations related to the fire sprinkler requirements, it is Staff's assessment that the benefit to cost ratio for the Project has greatly diminished. In addition, Staff are of the opinion that there may be a significant risk of budget over-run for the Project due to the age and condition of the building, the unknowns associated with the original construction, and the intrusive nature of the Project. Looking at the City's overall needs, priorities and budgets, it is staff's view that other competing priorities within the City are better served by returning the funds to the reserve and/or re-allocating the funds to existing or future priorities. Based on the information provided above, it is Staff's assessment that maintaining the current conditions (i.e. leaving the existing stairwell lift in place) is the preferred option.

Second Floor Washroom

Adding a single-occupancy washroom on the second floor would improve the functionality of the building and may lessen the use of the stairwells and the existing lift, and therefore is still recommended by staff.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff do not recommend proceeding with the full scope of the Heritage Hall Accessibility Project (i.e. installation of an elevator and construction of two washrooms) and instead reducing the scope to implement a fully accessible washroom in the coat storage area on the second floor, which would still help to improve accessibility and functionality of the space.

Staff recommend procuring pricing from additional contractors for this scope of work.

Alternatives

- a. Subject to a successful overall project reprioritization process to free up additional reserve funds, proceed with full scope of Project, including sprinklers, and approve an additional \$835K. This additional costs assumes the accessibility grant (\$125k) is not received and includes design and contingency. Staff anticipate the reprioritization process will result in higher priority projects being either deferred or cancelled, and may require

some internal borrowing. Note that the current proposals are valid until February 25, 2025;

- b. Pause the current Project and review the sprinkler requirements of the Building Bylaw No. 2131, 2003 and then reconsider afterwards as part of future business planning;
- c. Do not proceed with any portion of the Project at this time; or
- d. Other.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- Principled Governance Balanced Economic Prosperity Infrastructure
- Community Spirit & Wellbeing Corporate Pride Public Safety
- Not Applicable

WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS

- Already accounted for in department workplan / no adjustments required
- Emergent issue / will require deferral of other priority(ies)
- Other

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- None Budget Previously Approved Referral to Business Planning
- Other

Staff recommend procuring pricing specifically for construction of a single-occupancy washroom at the coat storage area on the second floor. Staff's recommended funding source is the current Project budget, and returning the remainder of the Project budget to the General Facilities Reserve once the project has been completed. To date, approximately \$55K of the Project budget has been expended on consulting fees (i.e. design development and tendering efforts).

Note that proceeding with the Heritage Hall Accessibility project (i.e. elevator and two washrooms) would require an increase to the Project budget as discussed in the alternatives above.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Comment(s):

Various topics related to the Heritage Hall Accessibility Project have been presented to Council and the public previously.

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral Yes No Other

SIGN-OFFS

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