



## RM of Edenwold Proposed Fire Hall Project – FAQ's

The RM of Edenwold recently announced plans to begin work on the establishment of an RM of Edenwold fire department and the construction of a fire hall in Emerald Park. To see the announcement, please refer to the RM's website at [www.rmedenwold.ca](http://www.rmedenwold.ca).

The RM has compiled a list of answers to the questions you or your neighbours may have about the project.

### **Where would the fire hall be located?**

The proposed fire hall would be located on the same site as the RM's office in Emerald Park. The RM currently has over 10 acres of land available and has done preliminary work to envision how the building could be situated on the site. The location is positioned well to service future growth in the area with proximity and convenient access to the proposed Royal Park development. Additionally, this location is ideal because there is excellent connectivity to the RM's urban residential community, to Emerald Park's businesses, and to the highway and overpass system.

### **How will a new fire hall impact delivery of emergency services in the area?**

The addition of the new fire hall would improve response times throughout the area. There are no major highways or intersections between the proposed fire hall site and the majority of Emerald Park residents and businesses. Contracts with other fire departments would remain in place and continue to be negotiated in accordance with contract timelines.

### **How are fire services provided across the RM and how are operations expected to change?**

The RM of Edenwold has separate contracts with the following 5 fire departments: (1) White City; (2) Balgonie; (3) Edenwold; (4) Pilot Butte; and, (5) Kronau.

Each of these contracts is based on a region of the RM where the department has primary responsibility for providing fire protection services. The RM also has a secondary contract with the City of Regina, which is supplementary to the others. Alongside these contracts, the RM contributes to capital and equipment costs.

Over the 3-year period from 2018 to 2020, the RM will have contributed about \$330,500 to the operation of White City's fire department (amounting to an average of about \$110,000 per year). In 2019, the RM's contribution of \$110,000 covered 58% of the Town's forecasted expenditures for the fire department<sup>1</sup>.

Over the same 3- year period, the RM will have contributed \$171,000 to Pilot Butte, \$171,000 to Balgonie and \$47,000 to Edenwold for operations. Kronau bills on a per service basis.

The following notes contributions the RM has made to fire protections services in the region over the last few years:

- 2019 - \$25,000 to the Village of Edenwold (50% cost share) to upgrade the 1991 GMC Water Truck
- 2019 - \$90,000 (50% cost share in 2019 and 2020) for Balgonie for a new Fire Pumper Truck
- 2018 - \$75,000 (100% cost) for a water tanker truck for Pilot Butte

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<sup>1</sup> Source: RM's Fire Services Contract Agreement and payments and White City Budget 2020. Link: <https://whitcity.ca/userdata/files/409/Your%20Government/Get%20Government%20Information/Budget%202020%20-%20Final%20-%20Web%20Version.pdf> (Note: 2019 Fire Services expenditures were forecasted to be \$189,689.)

- 2017 - \$126,000 (50% of the cost) of new rapid response truck with Pilot Butte
- 2016 - \$19,800 (38% of the cost) of regional-use ladder truck house in White City
- 2016 - \$56,173 (65% of the cost) of new water tanker fire truck for White City

With the development of the new fire hall in Emerald Park, the operational and regional structure for the provision of fire protection services is not expected to change with the exception of the current arrangement with White City. As a result of the development of the RM fire hall, it is expected that the area of the RM to be served by the White City fire department would be reduced.

There is a regional approach to fire protection service delivery that ensures mutual aid to neighbours throughout the area. The RM believes the addition of a new fire department and fire hall would strengthen the protective service delivery for the entire region.

### What is the estimated cost?

Preliminary estimates put the cost for development of the proposed fire hall at approximately \$900,000.

Category	Estimated Cost	2020	2021
Building	\$900,000.00	\$675,000.00	\$225,000.00
Driveway/Parking	\$150,000.00	\$37,500.00	\$112,500.00
Generator	\$55,000.00		\$55,000.00
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$1,105,000.00</b>	<b>\$712,500.00</b>	<b>\$392,500.00</b>

### Will our taxes go up? How will the RM pay for the fire hall?

There are no tax increases proposed to fund the fire hall and the existing tax base is expected to be able to cover the annual operations cost without issue.

In support of this project, the RM has been saving money in a reserve account for over 12 years. The funds in this account were obtained in part from contributions by land developers. At present, the reserve account holds over \$790,000, representing over 70% of the total construction costs. The RM has also earmarked \$225,000 from the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program (MEEP) for this project. A grant application was submitted for up to \$25,000 to help defer some of the cost and the RM is exploring options for other grants as well as corporate donations. About \$60,000 is anticipated to be received from sponsorships.

The reserve account dollars together with the MEEP dollars, the potential grant and potential sponsorship add up to a total of \$1,100,000 leaving about \$5,000 owing for the construction of the fire hall facility.

### When will it be built?

It is anticipated that the municipality could make a final decision on the project and award a contract this summer to see the project completed as early as this coming winter.

### How much will it cost to equip the hall?

The budget for the start-up of the fire hall and fire department is about \$985,000 to be paid over a period of about 3 – 5 years, depending on when appropriate equipment becomes available. The RM already owns two key pieces of fire fighting equipment, so there are no new apparatuses required for start-up.



Category	Estimated Cost	2020/21	2022-2025
Apparatus	\$584,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$534,000.00
Firefighters	\$165,000.00	\$165,000.00	
Communications	\$122,950.00	\$122,950.00	
Equipment/Tools	\$111,600.00	\$111,600.00	
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$983,550.00</b>	<b>\$449,550.00</b>	<b>\$534,000.00</b>

### What will annual costs be for operation?

The RM has developed a projected operational budget for the new fire hall and fire department at approximately \$127,200 annually.

Category	Estimated Cost
Communication	\$12,400.00
Personnel	\$54,500.00
Building	\$11,800.00
Apparatus	\$5,500.00
Other	\$43,000.00
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$127,200.00</b>

Based on comparisons with neighbouring fire departments, this budget falls within a reasonable range as the annual budgets for similar departments (except White City) fall within the \$110,000 to \$115,000 range. White City employs a fire chief and has a higher operational budget of over \$225,000 per year.

For reference, the operational budget of \$127,200 represents 1 percent of the RM's 2020 operational budget of \$13 Million.

### How do the costs of the proposed fire hall compare to current fire services costs?

The RM carried out a cost benefit analysis of the proposed hall in comparison with the option of continuing to purchase fire protection services exclusively from neighbouring jurisdictions. The analysis revealed that the cost of fire services in the RM is estimated to be \$82,000 more over an 11-year period (from 2019-2030) if the RM moves ahead with the construction of a new fire hall. However, because of compound increases to contract costs in the scenario where the RM continues to be serviced exclusively by external departments, over a longer-term period, the RM is expected to see considerable savings by constructing a new fire hall. A review of a 21-year period (from 2019-2040) shows savings of \$1.5 Million overall for the RM by constructing a new fire hall in comparison with the alternative of not constructing a hall and continuing to purchase fire protection services exclusively from neighbouring jurisdictions.

### What other factors are considered alongside costs?

Although cost is an important factor, there are other relevant considerations regarding the proposal that are being evaluated as well.

Control and Operations Management - In today's scenario, the RM does not have a seat at the table in the management or decision-making processes for the departments that provide fire protection services to the RM, despite providing more than 50% of annual costs in some cases. Should the RM construct and operate a fire hall



and fire department, it would enable the RM Council to have control over the department and ensure that all purchases and decisions are appropriate for the area being serviced. The RM could ensure cost-effective decision-making and efficiency of service.

Fair Contract Negotiation - As a service-provider of fire protection services, if the RM were to develop a fire department, it would put the RM in a stronger position for negotiations with neighbouring departments regarding contract fees or potential regional capital purchases.

Adequate Service Delivery - In the scenario where the RM continues to purchase fire protection services from neighbouring municipalities, the RM runs the risk of being dissatisfied with the services available. The option of constructing a fire hall and establishing a new department in Emerald Park provides the RM with more certainty as to the future service delivery especially to Emerald Park, which is the highest-density area of the municipality.

### **Why does the community need another fire hall? There's already one located in White City.**

From an economic standpoint, the RM's annual contributions to the White City fire department have grown considerably with the growth of our community and Council believes these dollars would be maximized by investing in a second location closer to the densest part of our community. At present, the RM is contributing about 58% of the revenue used to cover the White City fire department's forecasted expenditures.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the RM has not been provided with an opportunity to participate in management or operations of the department or decision-making, despite having requested to be included in these discussions.

According to budget documents, White City has plans to expand its fire hall in 2023 with an estimated budget of \$475,000.<sup>3</sup> The RM believes our community will be better served with a second location in closer proximity to residents than a large hall in White City, east of Highway 48. The Town anticipates seeing rapid growth within its own community in the coming years<sup>4</sup>, therefore, the planned expansion is in line with its own growth plans.

The RM does not see the proposed fire hall in Emerald Park to be a duplication of service in the area, but rather, an improvement to the delivery of service locally to ensure the best possible service for our existing community and accommodate the growth that is coming. The future development of Royal Park and the Town Centre, for example, will put strain on our existing emergency response services. With construction bids coming in at competitive prices, well-located land readily available, and a strong capital-costing plan in place, we feel that now is the time to proactively invest in the safety of our community.

### **What does this say about "Cooperation, not Annexation"?**

The RM wants to work cooperatively with the Town of White City as we do with our other neighbours and work together as co-creators and collaborators in the development and servicing of our shared community.

While it is unpleasant and disappointing, the current political climate does not create a platform for productive negotiations.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: RM's Fire Services Contract Agreement and payments and White City Budget 2020. Link: <https://whitecity.ca/userdata/files/409/Your%20Government/Get%20Government%20Information/Budget%202020%20-%20Final%20-%20Web%20Version.pdf> (Note: 2019 Fire Services expenditures were forecasted to be \$189,689.)

<sup>3</sup> Source: White City Budget 2020. Link: <https://whitecity.ca/userdata/files/409/Your%20Government/Get%20Government%20Information/Budget%202020%20-%20Final%20-%20Web%20Version.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Source: White City "One Community, One Voice" website. Town of White City Future Growth Study by Crosby Hanna & Associates.

