

Demolition of the Ernie Bodin Community Center

Background

The Ernie Bodin Community Centre (EBCC) is a modular building constructed around 1970 and consists of 25 modules joined together. The building is single story with a crawlspace and was originally constructed to serve as a hospital. Since then, a change in use has occurred and the building now operates as a community center. This change in use has changed building code and safety requirements for the facility. At over 50 years old the modular building has far outlived the expected age of a facility of this type.

Facility Assessments

A high-level building code analysis and building assessment was completed for the existing space to identify code deficiencies and make recommendations for each building system. Upon completion of the code analysis, several items of concern regarding fire and life safety were discovered. Council further directed staff to engage the services of an architectural firm to complete a detailed assessment to determine if a retrofit is feasible and what the estimated cost of the project would be. Their assessment concluded with the recommendation to demolish the facility as it would cost just as much to retrofit the modular building as it would to build a new building.

Engagement with EBCC User Groups

A vision and needs workshop was conducted on January 27, 2022 with the current EBCC user groups to understand how the existing facility is performing and what could be done to support users. In summary, the critical items identified by tenants and our consultants were:

1. The existing facility is not functioning well for its current use and should be decommissioned.
2. A plan should be developed to move each tenant from the EBCC to an appropriate new location.
3. If a new facility is constructed it should be multi-generational, modern and support the healthy and active lifestyle critical to the community – a subcommittee could be formed to determine overall community needs and not just those in EBCC.
4. If a new facility is desired, next steps should be taken to develop a Functional Program, “Class D” construction estimate, and Conceptual Design to assist in grant applications as they arise.

The Final Decision

Based on the facility assessments, engagement with tenants, and consideration of the District’s long-term financial plans, Council directed staff to proceed with the recommended demolition of the EBCC within a two-year timeframe.

Why a Two-Year Timeframe?

It was recommended that if the existing facility was to remain in operation beyond the 2-year period to 5 years, there would need to be life safety improvements made at an estimated cost of \$98,000. If the building is to be extended past the 5-year mark it would take further significant upgrades to the life safety system. Rather than sink funding into a building that was recommended for demolition anyway, those funds along with the existing operational/capital costs can be used to assist with the transition process and demolition.

Where will the Tenants Go?

The District intends to support the current users where we can with their transition from the EBCC. Staff and some tenants have already identified locations within the community that could suite their needs either permanently or temporarily while other options are considered.

Are there plans to rebuild?

Currently, there are no imminent plans to replace the EBCC with a new build. A large construction project like this will require further public engagement to assess the needs of the community as well as extensive financial planning to ensure the long-term sustainability of the building without major impact to essential service levels and property taxes. Grant funding would likely have to play a big role in bringing a new facility to reality. The 2022 estimated costs to retrofit or replace what is currently there is \$10 million. A portion of the facility is used primarily for storage, as a result, there could be upwards of \$5 million in cost savings if a new build was reduced in size by 50%.

What will happen to the grounds after demolition?

The District will commence a master plan for the Spirit Square/EBCC grounds in 2023. Once that process starts, we will be inviting residents to provide feedback into the future of that location.

Where Can I Learn More?

Please view the following reports for further detail into the decisions:

- [June 14, 2021 – Regular Council Meeting – EBCC Report](#)
- [June 14, 2021 – Council Meeting Minutes](#)
- [July 25, 2022 – Regular Council Meeting – EBCC Report](#)

Further updates and public engagement opportunities will be posted on the District of Mackenzie website (www.districtofmackenzie.ca) and Facebook page. Inquiries can be directed to:

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