

Staff Report to Council

Title: Station 12 Women’s Washroom

Report Number: Emergency Services-2024-03

Director: Community Services

Manager: Emergency Services

Meeting Date:

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Date to be considered by Council:

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Recommendation:

That Council approve staff to construct a women’s washroom facility at Kincardine Fire and Emergency Service (KFES) Station 12 that deviates from the 2021 Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS).

Executive Summary:

Station 12 requires adequate standalone washroom/shower facility for female firefighters. The retained architect provided options to work within the existing firehall footprint. The architect provided five options to consider. Three of the options if chosen would have resulted in a reduction of washroom/shower space currently provided for the male staff/firefighters. While another option would have left us without “universal washroom” which does not meet the building code.

Strategic Priorities:

B.7-Ensure municipal facilities and owned lands make the best use of each asset

Financial Considerations:

Council has carried forward \$45,000 for a number of budget cycles for this project. Staff continue to advance the project in acquiring firm pricing to complete this renovation. However, to meet the FADS requirements, it has changed scope from the original plan.

Policy:

N/A

Context and Background Information:

Currently Station 12 does not have a standalone female washroom/shower facility. Female firefighters are alternating use of the male washroom/shower facilities. In an effort to retain and recruit female firefighters at Station 12, the municipality is required to provide them with their own washroom/shower facilities. After consultation with the municipal building division staff regarding the fire hall's designation as a "post disaster" building as well as FADS requirements, Station 12 administrative staff were advised to retain an architect to provide a few options to consider.

The new shower area will only be used by female firefighters and is not intended to be used by the public. To control the use of the shower area, a coded door lock will be installed on the interior door entering the shower area. This would allow the door to the shower area to be locked, limiting access to only female firefighters and KFES maintenance staff.

Through the design process, Station 12 administrative staff identified "option 4" as the best overall option to work within the existing footprint, maintaining a "universal washroom" and not decreasing male washroom/shower facilities. However, it was realized that the proposed new accessible washroom/shower design would not be able to meet the FADS with regards to the "push/pull" space beside the interior door. FADS requires 600mm of space beside a door and the proposed layout provides 300mm.

The remainder of the washroom design is compliant with the FADS and all the renos that would be completed to create the female washroom/shower area do meet the minimum Ontario Building Code.

This deviation from the FADS should fall under the "technically infeasible" provisions of the standard. In this case, "technically infeasible" refers to, "other existing physical or site constraints [that] prohibit modification or addition of necessary elements, spaces or features which are in full and strict compliance with the minimum requirements for new construction." This renovation project is confined by an existing footprint of the administrative side of the firehall in which the new female washroom/shower facility will be located.

While it is unfortunate that the space available at Station 12 will not allow the renovation plans to fully comply with the FADS, it should be noted that the proposed construction will be a significant improvement for accessibility at the station. Once completed, this project will increase the number of standalone washroom/shower facilities from 1 to 2 facilities.

Consultation Overview:

Station 12 female firefighters were consulted.

Municipal Building division staff were engaged to provide feedback as it pertains to the building code and ensuring compliancy.

Retained architect to ensure compliancy.

Fire Chief Cottrill participated in the Accessibility Committee meeting which took place on March 28, 2024, at 16:00. The committee was provided with images of the preferred washroom reno option. Both images were the same, however on one of the images the architect had identified (in red) what item deviated from FADS requirements.

The Fire Chief engaged in a question and answer session with committee members via the zoom. The accessibility committee did not bring forward any concerns with the deviations.

Origin:

KFES Station 12 hired their first female firefighter in 2021, the second started in 2023. It was recognized prior to the 2021 hiring that changes to the washroom/shower facilities would need to be made to the building that was built in 1994.

Implementation Considerations:

This project has been a budget carry over for 3 years. In an effort to retain existing female firefighters and attract new ones, the municipality is required to provide suitable facilities. If approved KFES admin staff will generate an RFP.

Risk Analysis:

Risks with not completing these renovations could be the loss of existing female firefighters and or the inability to attract new female firefighters during future recruitments.

Attachments: None

Prepared by: Matt Cottrill, Acting Fire Chief

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