



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT October 21, 2024
MEETING TYPE & DATE Committee of the Whole of October 30, 2024
FROM: Facilities and Transit Division
Community Services Department
SUBJECT: Boardroom Renovation Project - Conceptual Drawings
FILE: 0810-20 ING175

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present conceptual design options for a phased-in renovation of the Boardroom on the 2nd floor of the CVRD Administration Office.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board on October 30, 2024 that staff proceed with Phase 1 - Option 1B of the Board Room Renovation Project.

BACKGROUND

To prepare for future increases in Board membership, the CVRD initiated a boardroom space planning exercise in late 2023. The scope of the project initially included improvements to IT services and expansion of the boardroom beyond its current walls to increase capacity of the board table and public gallery. Based on preliminary concepts, the estimated cost for the physical renovation was \$124,825 (not including furniture replacement, consultants, or project contingencies) and \$299,000 for IT infrastructure.

In early 2024, it was determined in consultation with CVRD Senior Management and Board members that variables including future Board member composition, public gallery demands, and overall functionality of the space required additional investigation prior to developing a detailed design plan and proceeding with construction.

Beginning in May 2024, a CVRD project team was assembled to develop project deliverables, carry out interest-holder consultation, and prepare a variety of options in both scale and expense for Board consideration. The target date for preparation of detailed drawings and cost estimates was the end of 2024 to allow for any required changes for the 2025 budget.

In June 2024, Board members were consulted regarding the project, specifically which project deliverables should be prioritized to ensure successful outcomes. From this feedback, the priority concerns were determined to be improved safety and security of all those in attendance, reliable and effective IT solutions for meetings, and increasing capacity of the Board table for future additional members. Increasing gallery space from the current 34 seats was not deemed to be a high priority.

With this feedback, it was determined by the project team that continuing with planned IT infrastructure upgrades and investigating furniture design and layout options would provide a

lower cost solution when compared to a larger physical renovation including removing or moving interior walls and doors. Furniture was previously not included in the scope of the project, but due to the custom design and dimensions of the existing table, furniture replacement is a base requirement to allow for increased Board membership. The IT improvements are adaptable to various configurations within the space, though a large departure from the current layout will carry additional project costs.

In August 2024, an interior design consultant was retained to assess the current layout of the boardroom and provide design options for additional Board members, staff representation at meetings, improved location and design of the podium space, improved safety and security, while limiting the impact on current gallery space (if possible).

In September 2024, the Board approved a \$240,000 budget for IT upgrades within the boardroom. The RFP for this project has been awarded, with installation expected to commence prior to the end of 2024. Project deliverables have been designed in consideration for future layout changes within the space.

Based on the information and feedback gathered to date, the interior designer has prepared two conceptual designs for consideration (Attachment A).

ANALYSIS

The following guiding principles were applied in considering the best approach for renovating the board room:

- **Functionality** - includes space allocation for Board members, CVRD staff, and the public gallery with a focus on safety, security and collaboration.
- **Longevity** - is an estimate of how long the option will remain functional based on anticipated growth of Board membership and public interest in attendance.
- **Cost** - at this time, due to the conceptual nature of the various project options, only general cost estimates have been provided.

With the above principles in mind and based on initial feedback from the Board, it was determined that this project has two distinct phases:

- **Phase 1 – Revised Layout with New Furniture:** Beyond necessary IT infrastructure upgrades, increasing capacity around the Board table to prepare for expansion is the most important deliverable of the project, requiring new furniture and revision to the current layout to ensure capacity and functionality in a relatively small space.
- **Phase 2 – Board Room Expansion:** Completing the deliverables in Phase 1 will reduce public gallery capacity. To meet or exceed current public gallery capacity, expansion of the room beyond the current floor plan is required.

Phase 1 – Revised Layout with New Furniture

Attachment A of this report includes two conceptual drawings displaying revised layouts for the boardroom, inclusive of new furniture. At the lowest cost range, this project includes only replacement of existing furniture including the Board table, CVRD staff tables, new chairs, podium table, and gallery divider. At the high end, additional items including lighting upgrades and finishing details (paint, artwork, carpet, etc.) may be considered to provide a more complete, professional design.

Both of these options will significantly improve functionality of the space for anticipated additional Board members. Staff accommodation is expected to remain unchanged due to attendance requirements, but due to expansion of the Board table both options include a reduction in public gallery seating.

Longevity of both designs is short to medium-term (5-10 years) depending on future Board membership expansion and demand for additional public gallery attendance.

Until a layout option is selected and detailed design is completed, room renovation costs including electrical and finishing are unknown but not anticipated to exceed \$30,000. A place holder amount of \$70,000 has been allocated for the furniture (Attachment C). Based on a more recent preliminary cost estimate received October 18, 2024, the value of furniture-only replacement is anticipated to be between \$70,000 and \$190,000 depending on finishes and whether some existing furniture (chairs) can be reused.

Option 1A – North/South Board Table Orientation

This option is a departure from the current table layout, turning the table 90 degrees with staff desks relocated to between the Board table and the public gallery.

- Positive aspects of this design include:
 - Ability to expand the Board table from 19 to 22 members by inserting additional pieces to close the ellipse.
 - Two options for podium locations.
 - Maximized public gallery space (28 seats).
- Drawbacks to this design include:
 - Some Board members will have their backs to staff and the public during meetings.
 - Less accessible seating options for Board members and staff with mobility concerns.
 - Increased cost for electrical/lighting modification requirements to illuminate the Board table due to the current orientation of ceiling bulkhead lighting.
 - New furniture does not line up with in-floor outlets as conveniently as the current layout.
 - Higher project cost due to departure from current table and room layout.

Option 1B – Current Board Table Orientation – RECOMMENDED

This option is an expansion of the current model, with a central Board table extending towards the main entrance doors.

- Positive aspects of this design include:
 - Better visual connectivity between Board members, staff, and the public gallery.
 - Good visibility for all Board members and staff towards podium location.
 - More accessible seating options for Board members and staff with mobility concerns.
 - Better alignment with current ceiling lighting, though modifications may still be required.
 - Similar configuration to current layout will reduce costs as compared to Option 1A.
- Drawbacks to this design include:
 - Reduced public gallery capacity compared to Option 1A (20 seats instead of 28)

Both of these options include a single seated podium to improve accessibility and comfort for users. The podium will also have an optional leaf or folding desk to allow for use by two people when needed.

It is recommended to include lighting upgrades for the space if this project proceeds. The current space utilizes enough light fixtures, but the type of lighting does not adequately illuminate the space, especially towards the ceiling. Improving lighting will create a more inviting atmosphere and should make the space look larger than it currently appears.

Phase 2 – Board Room Expansion

The common drawback between both options in Phase 1 is a reduction in public gallery seating capacity from 34 to either 28 or 20. In order to provide additional public gallery space, the square footage of the boardroom must be increased. Feasible concepts have been identified to date, though if expansion is pursued, an Architect will need to be retained to analyze the space and potential options that may or may not include the following considerations:

- Attachment B of this report includes a conceptual drawing that was developed by staff in 2023 to increase square footage of the existing Boardroom. Quotes from contractors were gathered in late 2023, with a cost estimate at the time of \$124,825; however, the BC Building Code requires that this project be designed and overseen by an Architect.
- Review of building construction drawings indicates that removing the east wall of the board room is feasible, but will require significant renovation and replacement of ceiling, flooring, lighting, adjustments to the HVAC system and other components to provide a finished appearance to the space. This renovation could add 20 to 25 public gallery seats, pending the permitted room occupancy under the BC Building Code.
- Other options are possible, including expansion into the spaces currently occupied by Committee rooms 1 and 2 and utilizing modular walls to open and close spaces as required to maximize functionality of the overall space. Space for meeting rooms and working staff is already limited, so expansion of the boardroom beyond its current square footage will require careful analysis of the affects on overall building capacity.
- Any expansion of the room will extend the functionality of the space beyond the 5-10 years estimated for Phase 1. These options will add public gallery capacity (20+ seats) and generate space for further Board membership. The high-level estimated cost to expand the boardroom, not including furniture, is currently projected to begin at \$200,000 and may rise up to \$500,000 depending on the scope of the project.

Next Steps

In order to proceed to detailed design and cost estimating, a refined project scope is required. Phase 1 is the highest priority at this time due to capacity needs around the Board table, but if Phase 2 is being considered for planning and implementation in the short to medium term (5-10 years), then it is recommended that Phase 1 be paused until conceptual designs and cost estimates are developed and approved for Phase 2.

If Phase 1 is supported on its own, staff will continue working with the interior design consultant to gather options for finishes, materials, lighting, security partitions, furniture styles/specifications, and colour options, based on which layout is selected. Two 2025 budget Capital Asset Investment forms are included in the 2025 Draft Budget for Board consideration (Attachments C and D).

If neither option is supported at this time, based on feedback from the Board, the CVRD project team will perform a debrief and consider what, if any, additional action is required at this time.

Due to the limitations of the current space to add additional members and long lead times for custom furniture, a minimum of 8-12 months is recommended for completing Phase 1 prior to anticipated delivery.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In April 2024, a staff report was presented to the Committee of the Whole on the 2nd floor boardroom project with the total cost for the room renovation of \$124,825 plus the IT equipment at \$299,000, for a total of \$423,825. In October 2024, the Board approved \$240,000 for IT equipment to be purchased in 2024.

See Attachment C – 2025 budget Capital Asset Investment form for the updated boardroom renovation and IT equipment.

See Attachment D – 2025 budget Capital Asset Investment form for the estimated furniture of \$70,000. As indicated in this report, the requested amount may have to be increased depending on the final scope of the project, and whether any furniture can be reused.

The funding for this project is \$100,000 from the Growing Communities Fund and the balance from the Function 200 operating reserves. It is staff's opinion that both project phases are eligible uses of the Growing Communities Fund; however, the IT equipment upgrade does not and is proceeding with use of reserve funds in F200.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

From the 2023-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan, this project supports:

- Strategic Objective 1 - Reconciliation, by providing capacity at the Board table for representatives from First Nations located within the Cowichan Valley.
- Strategic Objective 2 – Collaborative Governance, by supporting future changes in governance structures through additional capacity to the Board table and possible Board Room.

Referred to (upon completion):

- ☐ Community Services (*Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Arts & Culture, Facilities & Transit*)
- ☐ Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services*)
- ☐ Operations (*Utilities, Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management*)
- ☐ Land Use Services (*Community Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Development Services, Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement*)
- ☐ Strategic Services (*Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Environmental Services*)

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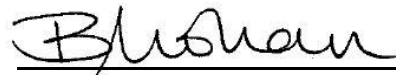


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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Concept Design for Revised Board Room Layout

Attachment B – Preliminary Concept Overview for Board Room Expansion

Attachment C – 2025 Budget Capital Asset Investment Form – Request for 2nd Floor Renovation
and IT Equipment

Attachment D - 2025 Budget Capital Asset Investment Form – Request for Boardroom Furniture