

Town of Whitby Staff Report

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Report Title: Animal Shelter and Enforcement Services Facility – Design and Approach Update

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: April 7, 2025

Report Number: CMS 03-25

Department(s) Responsible:

Community Services Department

Submitted by:

John Romano, Commissioner,
Community Services

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Community Services Report, CMS 03-25 be received as information;
2. That staff be directed to complete the detailed design and contract documentation to be tender ready, based on a two story, multi-purpose community building identified as (Option 1B Attachment #1 of this report); and,
3. That staff be directed to report back to Council for direction following the completion of the detailed design including final construction cost estimate, prior to issuing tender documents.

2. Highlights:

- The project team completed the schematic design for a two-storey Net Zero joint Animal Shelter/Enforcement Services facility based on (Option 1B) identified in LS 04-23.
- The project team continued refining the schematic design of the two-storey Net Zero multi-purpose Animal Shelter/Enforcement Services to include Community

Programming space, in addition to the initial plan for Animal Services and Enforcement, which would expand the proposed use of the facility to serve the growing community population. A conceptual site plan, floor plans and renderings for this option are contained in **Attachment #1** to this report.

3. Background:

The Animal Services section of the Town's Legal and Enforcement Services Division provides enforcement for animal complaints and sheltering for impounded animals for the Town, this service is currently operating out of the Whitby Animal Services Centre ("WASC") at 4680 Thickson Rd. N. Over the next 10 years, the existing shelter will require significant capital improvements that total approximately \$1.5 to \$1.6 million.

In the comprehensive Council report [LS 04-23](#) staff presented a thorough overview of animal sheltering options for the Town. Council examined four distinct options or sheltering partnerships, all of which considered the Town's projected growth and future sheltering requirements.

- **Option 1A** – Construction of a new one storey Animal Services Centre at the Whitby Operations Municipal Campus.
- **Option 1B** – Construction of a new two storey Animal and Enforcement Services Facility at the Whitby Operations Municipal Campus.
- **Option 2** – Partnership with the Humane Society of Durham Region ("HSDR") and the Ontario Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ("OSPCA").
- **Option 3** – Sharing Sheltering Services with Neighbouring Municipalities.
- **Option 4** – Maintain and Update the Existing WASC Facility at 4680 Thickson Road North.

Based on the detailed review of the available options, and the service impact on the community, staff did not recommend outsourcing the sheltering component of Animal Services to alternate municipalities nor private agencies. Staff recommended that a new joint WASC & Enforcement Services facility be constructed, at the south-west corner of McKinney Drive and Broadleaf Avenue, to co-locate all enforcement staff in a single location and the Town continue to provide sheltering services in Whitby.

The initial estimate based on the feasibility exercise indicated in [LS 04-23](#) for Option 1B was \$9,600,000.

4. Discussion:

Since Council's decision to proceed with Option 1B, Town staff have been working with our consultant team to complete the schematic design for the new facility. At the completion of the schematic design, the Town commissioned a Class D cost estimate for the Animal Shelter and Enforcement Services facility from a Cost Consultant in June 2024.

The cost estimate received from the Cost Consultant indicated that the cost of construction, including the building and related site work, was estimated to be \$17,141,581. This represented an increase of \$7,541,581 from the initial feasibility cost estimate of \$9,600,000 identified in LS 04-23.

Due to the cost increase, the project team undertook a more detailed value engineering exercise to refine the design in order to bring the project budget in line with the feasibility cost estimate.

In November 2024, staff received a revised Class D cost estimate with an estimated construction cost of \$15,946,700. The revised cost estimate includes \$15,187,300 for construction costs and a \$759,400 construction contingency. This revised cost estimate differs from the feasibility cost estimate identified in LS 04-23 by \$6,346,700 (= \$15,946,700 - \$9,600,000).

Reasons for Cost Variance

The disparity between the preliminary cost estimate and the November 2024 cost estimate can be summarized as follows:

- Refinement of the design from a feasibility study to a detailed schematic design, including building massing and amenity requirements
- Further clarification of the Net Zero design requirements
- The preliminary cost, estimated to be \$9,600,000, was based on a feasibility study and conceptual design developed in the project planning process. It assumed a potential variance of +/- 35% and included contingencies and allowances based on assumptions and limited information available at the time.
- The Class D estimate received in November 2024 was completed by a registered Professional Quantity Surveyor and is based on complete schematic design documents. This estimate includes contingencies and allowances, based on a higher level of detail development provided in the design documentation.

Council Report LS 04-23 advised that construction costs estimates would be further refined through the detailed design stage of the project and staff would request Capital Budget approval which may include re-allocating and advancing the capital funds from planned work at the current WASC for the next 10 years and utilizing the proceeds from the planned future sale of the existing WASC property.

Opportunities to expand uses for the facility

Given the November 2024 cost estimate, the project team explored uses for the facility to expand its value to the community, including community-related amenities. Animal Services is frequently cited as one of the Town's services that receives the most engagement within the community. Further, the Animal Services Section has had a great deal of success with community initiatives and engagement through yoga with kittens/puppies, kitten/puppy snuggling sessions (staff), festive open house events such as Halloween and Valentine's Day and summer celebrations, adoption, and microchip events. Having space within the facility itself will allow for greater engagement and expanded programming by Enforcement Services staff such as Coyote information sessions, Responsible Pet ownership presentations to groups including students, information, and public engagement sessions for new or changing by-laws.

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) provides a valuable opportunity for investing in community-related infrastructure that directly supports housing initiatives. By building this

new community facility, we can create a building that will accommodate the needs of the WASC and Enforcement services and build upon this opportunity by also creating a community resource to serve our growing population.

The Town seeks to create a versatile environment for future community resources and amenities within this facility. The goal is combining both the practical need for additional space but also create an environment for greater community engagement and collaboration.

Once created, this space will have a variety of opportunities to serve our diverse and growing community such as recreational programming including room rental for community groups or a warming/cooling center based on the needs of the community at the time. This integration also opens the possibility of utilizing HAF funding for this project, further enhancing its scope and impact by funding a project that will provide lasting infrastructure to the growing community. Although not all HAF funding installments are guaranteed, this potential funding stream could play a crucial role in offsetting a significant portion of the project costs, helping to ensure its success and long-term sustainability.

5. Financial Considerations:

As part of Staff Report LS 04-23, Council approved a capital project in the amount of \$1,300,000 for the Design, Contract Management, and Project Management of the joint Animal Shelter/Enforcement Services facility (Option 1B). To date, \$172,445 of costs have been incurred for project design.

The estimated cost of construction included in Staff Report LS 04-23 was \$9,600,000 and was planned to be funded through the Town's Asset Management Reserve and the future sale of the current WASC property. As noted in this report, the revised cost estimate has increased to \$15,946,700 or a \$6,346,700 increase from the original cost estimate as shown in Table 1, below:

Table 1

Project Construction Costs (Option 1B - Two Storey)	
Revised Construction Cost Estimate (Nov 2024)	\$15,946,700
Original Construction Cost Estimate (LS 04-23)	\$9,600,000
Construction Cost Estimate Increase	\$6,346,700

Subject to Council approval of this report, Staff will proceed with completing detailed design at the higher revised cost estimate amount. The consultant will also prepare tender-ready documents and further refine construction cost estimates for a future report to Council before issuing a tender for construction. In the interim, Staff will investigate the use of the HAF grant funding for this project and look at other grant funding that may become available. The use of HAF funding is dependent upon the Town achieving housing targets of the program, and cost savings/unallocated funding, if any, following the completion of the [Town's nine \(9\) local Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives](#). To date, the Town has received two (2) of an expected four (4) payments of \$6.2 million related to the HAF grant. The third installment of the HAF grant, an additional \$6.2 million, is expected by March/April 2026.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Staff have not engaged in additional public consultation regarding this project since Council considered LS 04-23.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

The Facilities Division of the Community Services Department has worked closely with the Legal and Enforcement Services Department, Strategic Initiatives in the Office of the CAO, and Financial Services in the development of this project.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The recommendation from LS 04-23 to continue offering sheltering services in-house and the recommendation of this report to construct a two-storey, multi-purpose community building, servicing animal control, enforcement, and community amenities to address and advance the following Community Strategic Priorities:

Whitby's Government

4.4 Ensure fiscal accountability and responsibly plan for growth

4.4.1 Deliver services that respond to community needs while balancing the impact to taxpayers

Proceeding with (Option 1B) allows for the Town to move forward with the construction of this project and to expand current levels of service for Animal Services and sheltering.

9. Attachments:

Attachment # 1 – Conceptual site plan, floor plans and renderings