



## Making an Informed Decision



One of the most fundamental principles of a functioning democracy is that citizens and elected officials will make informed decisions; decisions based on fact and reasoned dialogue, not rumor and misinformation. Unfortunately, in today's society, people are often "too busy" to inform themselves of the facts and social media tends to amplify gossip and speculation as if they were facts.

Council's desire to build a new public works facility is a case in point. The rumour mill has us building a "Taj Mahal" and abusing our authority by using the reverse petition process. The facts are:

1. we are simply proposing to build an efficient, functional workplace for one-third of our workforce;
2. the reverse petition process is an appropriate way for us to test the public's will in advance of a potential referendum if ten percent of the voters express concern about the proposed budget ceiling for this project.

Our public works crews build and maintain our road, water, sewer, and storm drain systems. They keep our roads clear of snow, streets clean in the summer, maintain our parks and flowerbeds, maintain the City's cemetery, pick up our garbage, and manage our landfill. Currently, this work is done out of 11 different buildings spread throughout the City. The two main locations beside the Johnston Bridge are on the floodplain; in the event of a flood our crews would have to move all their equipment to higher ground first before being able to do their job of protecting the City.

In 2001, the Council of the day decided it was time to replace the aged out public works buildings, but it took until 2013 before a Council (under the previous Mayor) purchased the old soccer fields on Sword Road for this purpose. No significant investments were made in the current facilities during this time and the cost of building a replacement yard grew every year. The current Council has decided to get on with the long overdue job of building a new facility.

There are three main reasons Council has decided to act now: the price of a replacement facility will simply keep escalating; we have a financial plan to make the debt payments without a tax increase; and, investing now will allow us to create local employment at a time when the general economy is weak. The proposed timeline for this project would see us begin to build the new facility next year just as the Arena project winds down.

Some have suggested an appropriate price for this project should be \$6.5 million not the up to \$10 million we are asking permission to borrow. In reality, the main public works building in the proposed project is estimated at about \$5.8 million. The rest of the costs are associated with yard development and much needed storage facilities; there is also a \$1 million contingency built into the project estimate. We are working with our local contracting community to ensure that the actual cost of building a replacement facility will be below the borrowing authority we are asking for.

I hope you will make an informed decision in this matter. For more detailed information about this project visit: [www.quesnel.ca/pwfacility.html](http://www.quesnel.ca/pwfacility.html).

If you've already voted and feel you did not make an informed decision one of the benefits of the reverse petition process is that you can reverse your vote by simply dropping in to City Hall and signing the appropriate form.

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