

Village of New Denver

# Summary Report

Resident Input on Future of Community Halls

4/7/2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION.....	3
Methodology.....	4
SURVEY RESULTS.....	4
Activities.....	4
Satisfaction and Suggestions .....	6
Suggested Improvements .....	7
FUTURE SPACES .....	9
New Construction, Renovation, or Both .....	10
Main Themes.....	10
Minor Themes.....	12
NEXT STEPS .....	13

## INTRODUCTION

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In light of the age and condition of New Denver's current community halls, the municipality has identified a need to create a plan to maintain, and possibly improve, these community spaces. The purpose of this report is to inform the Village of New Denver municipal leaders and local citizens of the opinions on current community facilities and future suggestions as identified by local residents. The information was collected through a recent community engagement process, to envision and define the community spaces that could best meet community needs and interests.

Over the past two years the Village of New Denver initiated a process to deliver an accurate and current report on the condition of the two municipally owned halls. To accomplish this, 9-Dot Engineering was hired in 2015 and 2016 with the financial support of Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) to assess the Knox Hall and the Bosun Hall. In January 2017, the municipality held an open house to share the information contained in the two structural assessment reports. The information was also made available at the Village office and website. Community stakeholders, as well as all local residents, were invited to respond to a written feedback survey with their opinions and ideas regarding the future of the halls during February 2017. Almost 100 local citizens provided input during this timeframe.

Current user groups of the halls were identified as stakeholders while planning for the public engagement process. An important stakeholder is the Lucerne Association for Community Education (LACE) due to their long involvement in managing and operating the Bosun Hall. There are a number of other important stakeholders including the Reading Centre volunteers, annual Knox Hall user groups, annual Bosun Hall user groups, and a variety of local non-profits and community groups, such as Bingo and Girl Guides, who use the halls regularly.

Involving the community in the process, from visioning to planning and beyond is of primary importance to ensure community support and satisfaction. The engagement process identified functional needs, creative ideas for the future, funding options, and more. It will help to continue the steps necessary to give New Denver residents and potential users the information needed to dream, prioritize, and plan.

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## Methodology

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One community open house was held to share information with Village of New Denver residents in January 2017. Participants were given a summary of the two structural reports by Steven Thompson, the principal engineer with 9-Dot Engineering. The intention was to explain the current state of the halls, share estimated costs for repairing the identified structural issues, discuss possible renovations and the estimated costs associated with those renovations, and give residents an opportunity to ask questions regarding the current state of the halls.

At the end of the presentation, feedback forms were made available to all participants (see Appendix A). They were encouraged to take extra copies and share the information with the broader community. Feedback forms were available online and at the Village office. Advertisements were placed in the local newspaper and on the Village website to bring awareness to the engagement process. 87 responses were received from community residents, as well as those that use the halls but live outside New Denver's boundaries. User groups were requested to give lists of improvements when they met with Village staff in the fall of 2016.

Analysis was completed by reviewing the forms for recurring themes, activities, suggestions for future use and funding ideas. The current satisfaction with the halls was measured and the activities were noted.

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## SURVEY RESULTS

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Of the 87 respondents that had used the halls in the past twelve months, 60% had used both the halls, 88% of the respondents had used the Bosun, and 72% had used the Knox Hall. Only 20% had not used the Knox and 9% had not used the Bosun.

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### Activities

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Respondents were asked to explain their use of the halls. The wide range of activities listed in the responses demonstrates that the halls are used by a variety of people and groups. Some of the activities listed are not currently being offered in the halls because more suitable spaces have been found, but generally, those respondents felt they would consider the halls again if certain upgrades were made.

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*"The Knox Hall is not big enough for some of the events like funerals and theatre productions. The Bosun Hall is necessary for these larger events."*

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Since the two buildings are so distinct in size there were obvious preferences in choosing one hall over another depending on the activity desired. Below are lists of activities mentioned in the feedback forms for both halls.

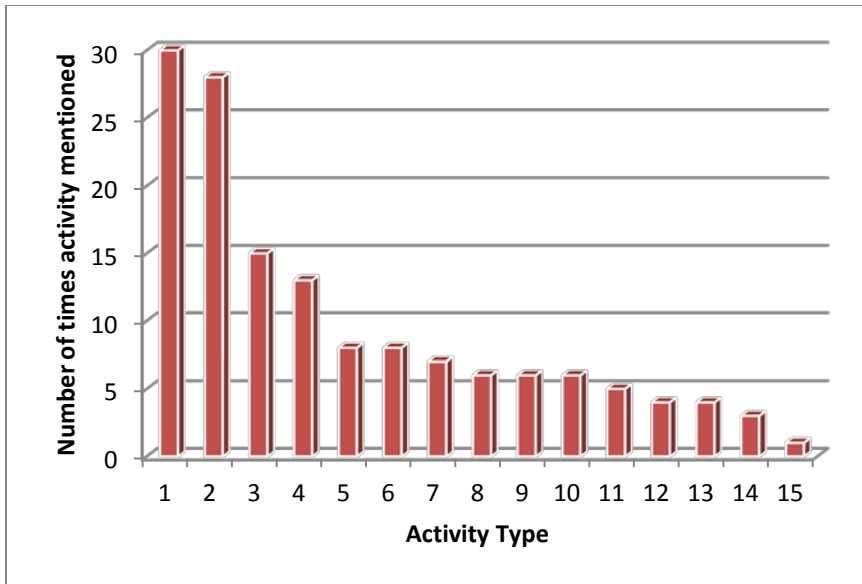


Figure-1 Knox Hall Activities

- Activity Type**
- 1 Professional Meeting
  - 2 Community Education
  - 3 Workshop/Training
  - 4 Library
  - 5 Public Meeting
  - 6 Meditation
  - 7 Book Launch
  - 8 Performance
  - 9 Seniors
  - 10 Choir
  - 11 Historical Events
  - 12 Event Staging
  - 13 Mother Goose
  - 14 Private Function
  - 15 Memorial
  - 16 Craft Exhibit

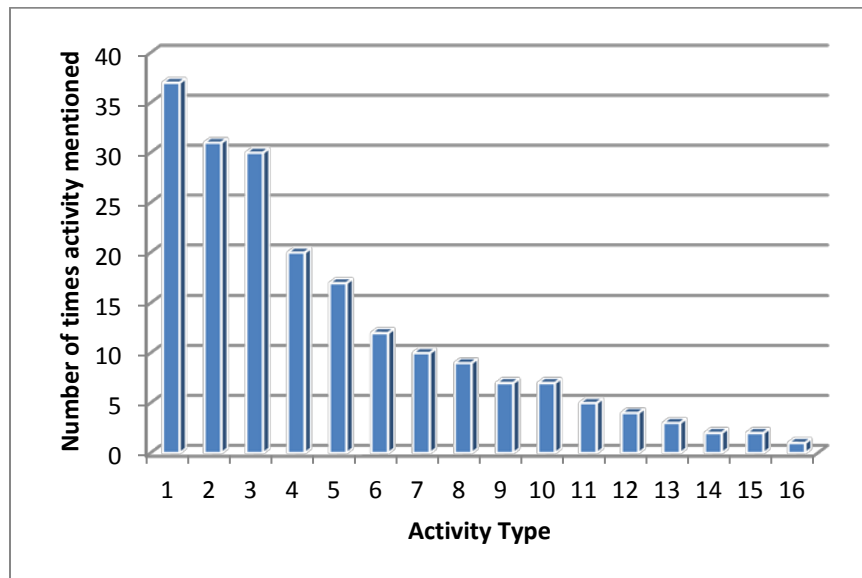


Figure -2 Bosun Hall Activities

- Activity Type**
- 1 Memorial
  - 2 Performance
  - 3 Holiday Events
  - 4 Fair/Markets
  - 5 Public Meeting
  - 6 Community Gathering
  - 7 Bingo
  - 8 Weddings
  - 9 Book Launch
  - 10 Private Function
  - 11 Community Education
  - 12 Election
  - 13 Guides/Brownies
  - 14 Movie Night
  - 15 Film Festival
  - 16 Workshop/Training

## Satisfaction and Suggestions

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The feedback collected shows that the majority of users were content with the size and locations of the halls, but were less satisfied with the interior spaces and how that affected the experience of the users. As noted, the halls have not seen significant renovations for over 20 years. This has resulted in the inevitable deterioration of the facilities and this was noted by most respondents.

Survey participants were asked to rank their satisfaction of the halls on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). The responses were then grouped into four categories for analysis purposes.

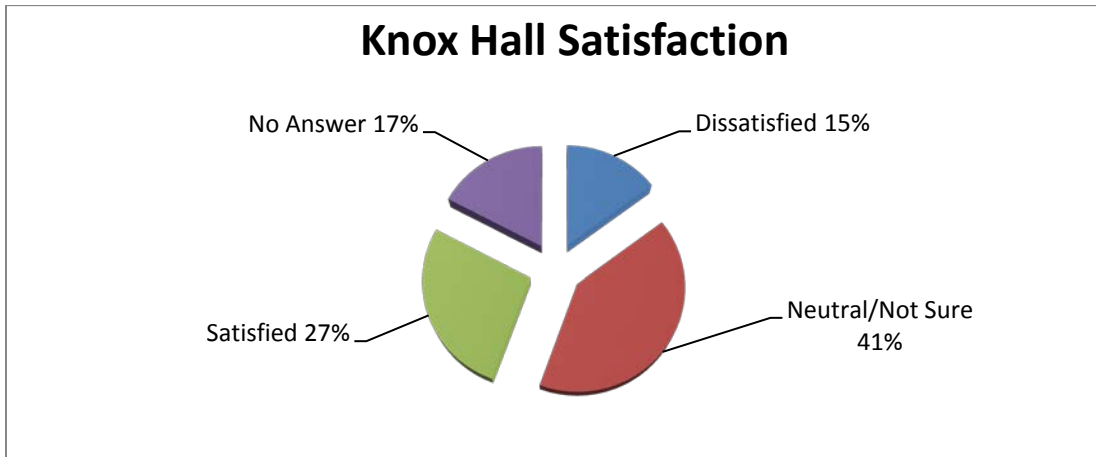


Figure- 3 Percent of Respondents Satisfied with Knox Hall

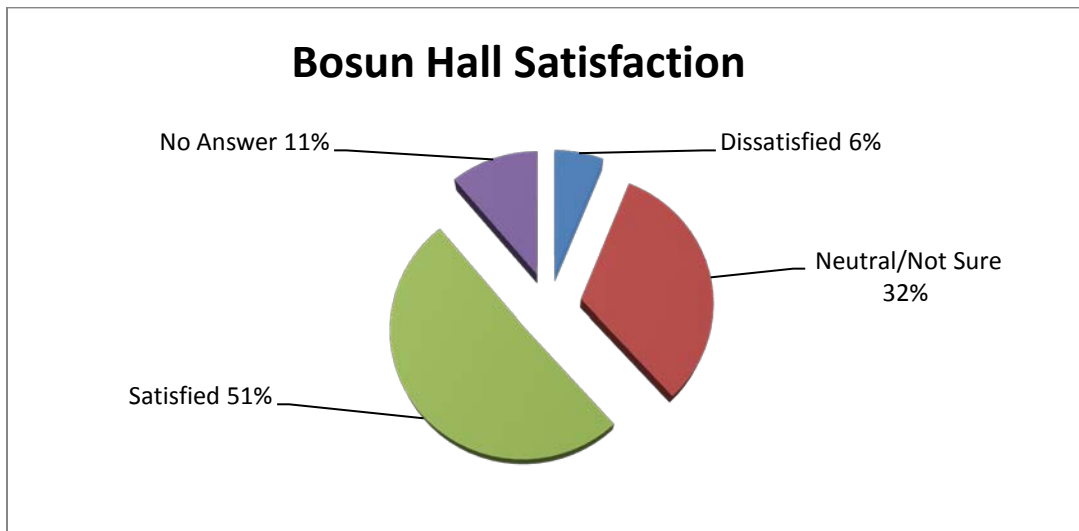


Figure - 4 Percent of Respondents Satisfied with Bosun Hall

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## Suggested Improvements

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Respondents were asked to explain their answer related to their satisfaction of the halls. The following lists include the mentioned upgrades or renovations made by respondents of the survey for both halls. The suggestions corresponded to the level of satisfaction they felt with each hall. Most survey respondents had used both halls and would welcome renovations to improve quality of user experience. Respondents mainly focussed on how the current state of the halls affected their experience of the event, rather than the structural repairs that must be a priority in any future scenario. It was often noted that suggested improvements could all be incorporated into a new facility as well.

### KNOX HALL IMPROVEMENTS

- Renovate interior to create modern, clean bright space while keeping/respecting major heritage features such as windows, vestibule, exterior
- Modernise kitchen
- Modernise bathroom
- Improve wheelchair access throughout including bathroom
- Separate sinks for art classes
- More plug-ins
- Replace chairs
- Create better storage
- Close in vestibule
- Hooks for coats
- Floor to be replaced with hard surface and portable rug
- Remove staircase for more floor space
- Improve HVAC and general ventilation
- Sound proof between upper and lower floors
- Improve lighting fixtures (LED, dimmable and remove fluorescent)
- Better Pest Control Needed
- Wi-Fi

## BOSUN HALL IMPROVEMENTS

- Improve performance area by creating better backstage space, improved acoustics, audio/video area
- Improve storage capabilities
- Replace lighting fixtures and options
- Kitchen is functional but upgrading it to a commercial food grade kitchen is considered a benefit
- HVAC system noisy- needs work
- Redesign layout for improved performance space
- Renovate interior to create modern, clean bright space
- Renovate bathrooms
- Upgrade electrical outlets for more options (ie. Weddings, meetings, workshops, performances)
- Add windows for natural light
- Public washrooms
- Riser system
- Solar panels and other sustainable technologies
- Public showers
- Improved green space
- Flexible partitions



## FUTURE SPACES

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The Village of New Denver has a number of designated heritage buildings which include the Bosun Hall and the Knox Hall. The other two heritage buildings owned by the Village are the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre and the Silvery Slocan Museum. In the case of the Bosun Hall and the Knox Hall, many years of deferred maintenance has created a situation where both halls are in need of considerable structural work to keep them as viable community facilities.

The Village sought resident input because there will be a need to prioritize due to limited financial and staff capacity. This was clearly explained at the public meeting so many of the themes that emerged were focussed on how important the spaces were to the fabric of the community and what possible options could be found to solve the issue.

What emerged from the responses was that having community spaces that are easily accessible in New Denver is considered a major benefit to living here. The halls themselves, due to the large difference in size were hard to compare and this led to the majority of respondents showing mixed feelings about how to approach the issue. Very few respondents were willing to lose a larger hall forever, but had suggestions for viable alternatives should that be the case. The heritage components of the buildings were also mentioned as being part of a larger picture of what made New Denver and the area so unique.

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*“I am not attached to the Bosun Hall structure, but I feel it is the “Heart of the Community” since so many significant life events take place there. What would we do without a hall of that size?”*

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Another recurring theme from the responses was that whatever funding decisions were made, these should complement what already exists in the area, rather than compete. The community halls play a role in community and economic development of our area, which was another general theme found throughout the responses.

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## New Construction, Renovation, or Both

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The feedback identified several options for what kind of facilities would best serve the community. Many of the respondents were concerned about the cost of renovating the Bosun Hall and felt that the community should not undertake such a large financial burden unless there was an obvious upgrade to the building and the services it offered.

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*“Build a new hall, if that is financially possible, but I don’t want this one torn down and be left with no hall.”*

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While most respondents recognized the historic and sentimental value placed on the Bosun Hall, they did not feel it was responsible to embark on a large restoration project unless outside funding could be secured. Because of this, there were a number of different solutions offered.

A fair number of respondents offered more than one idea. For example, the following quote shows the willingness to consider a number of options.

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*“My preference would be to find funding for both venues. Or to start anew with the Bosun Hall (if there is enough room) to serve both uses with a large venue for the community including performance space AND smaller studios needed.”*

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## Main Themes

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The five most commonly mentioned ideas or solutions related to the future of these spaces are listed below.

**Renovate Knox Hall immediately** – 35 people mentioned that they still wanted a larger facility, but since it entails much more money they would prefer to see renovations on Knox Hall completed first and then focus on solutions for the Bosun Hall.

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*“The Knox Hall is ideal for smaller events. Renovation and redecoration should be done to high standard in order to recapture and exploit heritage elements.”*

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**Focus on new large capacity hall** - As noted earlier in the report, the halls support a large number of events, activities and programs for local residents, regional residents and visitors. Many respondents felt it was important to continue to have facilities that benefit the health and well being of the community. However, there were a number of suggestions that expanded on what might be made available if a new or enlarged space did exist. The following list includes these alternate ideas:

- Expand funding range to include region so that bigger facility can be created
- Build a recreation centre with indoor pool and

gym

- Include senior housing
- Include a finished basement or second floor
- Include smaller spaces for meditation or yoga
- Have space available for day care/drop-in play space
- Have multi-use spaces for offices/meetings
- Dedicate space for performance use
- Use green building technologies in construction to lower health risks, environmental contamination and energy consumption
- Create a new, modern commercial kitchen for rental purposes
- Library
- Senior Activity Space
- Emergency Centre

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*"I don't think we should continue throwing money at two old buildings. I love the fact that they are heritage but we, as a small community, need to think about building a new facility. I think it's time we had a multifunctional community centre. A green building that is heat efficient, uses local wood, has flexible expandable spaces, a fitness centre that is warm, a daycare and community kitchen."*

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**Want both sizes preserved** – There were 29 mentions that both halls are very useful to the local community but also to visitors. They have heritage value and serve different functions.

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*"These two halls are an asset to our town and are used by locals and visiting tourists. To ignore their presence would be a loss and counterproductive to our delicate economic development."*

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**Prioritize the renovation or replacement of the Bosun Hall-** There is considerable overlap between those that want the Bosun Hall renovated and those that want it replaced with something equivalent or enlarged.

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*“The Bosun will be expensive to preserve. Do modifications in stages because it is expensive to ignore structural problems. Do it in stages, start with the foundation, then the roof. I support my tax dollars helping to preserve the Bosun Hall.”*

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**Leave Bosun as is or demolish it-** this category includes comments that considered building a newer facility on the site, use other spaces currently available such as the Silverton Memorial and the school, develop the site as a public washroom, gardens and picnic area. The main theme that connected these ideas was that they were not in favour of investing to improve the current Bosun Hall.

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*“Why are we considering a “putting more lipstick on a pig” reno? It’s rotting.”*

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## Minor Themes

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Ideas and solutions that were mentioned less often are included in the following theme.

**Sell one or both of them -** A number of suggestions were made that by selling the Knox Hall, funds could be made available for either renovation or new construction on the Bosun Hall site. A few suggested that selling the Bosun would create funds to renovate Knox Hall and add to the Heritage Reserve Fund.

## NEXT STEPS

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The results from this survey provide an overview of some of the views and values of community members with respect to the community halls of New Denver. This report also highlights the challenges of making decisions that meet the needs and interests of the community overall. To ensure the community input has been accurately reflected in this report it is suggested that a summary of results is shared with the community through an open house event.

Further consultation with identified stakeholders is also recommended as an opportunity to gather more detail on specific needs and concerns. The identified stakeholders include Lucerne Association for Community Education, the Reading Centre, Knox Hall annual user groups, Bosun Hall User groups, and potentially others. Space sharing opportunities, detailed functional planning, prioritization, and exploring funding options and opportunities are all important next steps.