



Town of Huntsville Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 29, 2026

To: General Committee

Report Number: OPS-2026-10

Confidential: No

Author(s): Randy Bissonette, Reva Frame,

Subject: Operations Centre - Property Feasibility

Report Highlights

This report requests additional resources to determine the feasibility of a new Operations Centre at 169 Madill Church Road.

Recommendation

WHEREAS: On December 10, 2025, staff were directed to report back on the feasibility of a new Operations Centre at 169 Madill Church Road;

AND WHEREAS: to complete a fulsome review of 169 Madill Church Road additional research and studies are required;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT: Staff be authorized to initiate the necessary plans and studies for site servicing requirements related to water and septic, fire suppression, and soil suitability.

AND FURTHER THAT: The costs of the plans and studies, to a maximum of \$50,000, be funded from the Roads Capital Reserve.

AND FURTHER THAT: Staff be directed to report back on the findings of the plans and studies and provide a substantiated recommendation on the feasibility of the Madill Church Road property for a new Operations Centre.

Background

Existing purpose:

The Town of Huntsville owns a large public works yard and buildings located at 169 Madill Church Road in Huntsville. The purpose of this facility is to provide an operations centre for the Town's Operations Division which includes Roads, Parks, Cemeteries and Fleet Maintenance. The site provides storage for heavy equipment, operations vehicles, parks equipment, vehicles, salt, sand, and materials such as culverts, couplers, and aggregates. The facility also includes office space and acts as a hub for all departments in the Operations division. The property is approx. 100 acres in size, with approx. 20 acres of cleared land and

approx. 80 acres of forested land with frontage on Madill Church Road and potential for access through Cearsar's Lane. The District also owns a portion of the property at Madill and has functioning lagoons in that location.

Over the past few years:

On June 24, 2019, the District of Muskoka presented an update on solid waste management in Huntsville and cited the Madill property as an ideal location for a new transfer station, or other waste management facility, in Huntsville.

In 2021, Tulloch Engineering was engaged to conduct a building condition assessment of the facility and design for a new building through RFP-2021-PW-10. The inspection was carried out in March 2022 and finalized in May 2022 and the overall assessment at the time was a fair to poor rating. At that time, Tulloch recommended that the building be replaced – this recommendation was made citing the age and poor construction of the building and given the extent of the work required to renovate the existing building. The new building design through RFP-2021-PW-10 was presented by Tulloch in July 2024.

In February 2023 during budget discussions, staff were directed to bring a report back on the capital needs at the Madill yard.

In 2024, Accent Building Sciences Inc. (ABSI) was engaged to conduct building condition assessments (BCA Assessment) and insurance appraisals for municipal buildings, which included the existing Operations Centre. The facility has been assessed as being in poor condition which marks a deterioration from the condition noted in 2022.

Throughout 2025, as a result of direction for staff to consider large Town facility projects from an overall, Town-wide, strategic perspective in addition to the condition assessments and failing components of the Operations facility, staff investigated various options for a new Operations Centre facility including replacement of the facility on the existing property and relocating to a different property.

In late 2025, staff were directed to report back on the feasibility of a new Operations Centre at the existing property (169 Madill Church Road).

Discussion

Water:

The property is currently serviced by a well. The intention with a new Operation Centre would be to use more water on a daily basis as part of preventative maintenance programs for the Town's fleet - washing the vehicles more frequently (with clean water) will help to remove corrosive contaminants from the vehicles (like winter salt) and will help the vehicles last longer. This means that the conditions of the vehicles would deteriorate at a slower rate, and replacements would be required less frequently. Because of this anticipated increase in water usage, the availability of the water supply is a concern (i.e., well water availability and flow rate are not as consistent as municipal services). While a well drilling company provided an indication in the past that the existing well water supply is adequate for the current facility (which does not include a wash bay), no formal study has been conducted to determine the overall availability and quality of the water on the property. It would be ideal to have a Hydrological Study performed in order to accurately assess the feasibility of the water supply for a new facility.

Septic:

The property is currently serviced by a septic system. As noted above, the intention is to use a significantly increased amount of water on a daily basis as part of the fleet preventative maintenance programs. As is required in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), shower facilities will also be required in a new facility. As a result of the increase in water usage, for preventative maintenance programs and shower facilities (which currently are not in the existing facility), an engineering report outlining the required sizing of the new septic system, which will need to be bigger than it currently is, should be performed.

Fire Suppression:

As part of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements, the property would also require a dedicated fire suppression system since the property is serviced by a well and septic system. The new building, estimated to be approx. 20,000 sq. ft., would more likely than not require a sprinkler system. A sprinkler system requires clean water (i.e., cannot pull from a stormwater pond) that is ready for use which would require some level of water storage tanks, pumps and generators at a minimum. It would be prudent to have an engineer provide options for fire suppression servicing at the property.

Soil Contamination & Suitability:

In the past, well water has been identified as not ideal for use on the vehicles as it has caused premature rusting due to the suspected salt contamination in the soil. While it is likely that the salt stored on the property has caused soil contamination, no formal study has been completed to confirm the contamination or determine the extent of it. Since the potential soil contamination can significantly impact the feasibility of constructing a new facility on the property, it would be prudent to have a professional soil engineer perform this analysis as well as provide the bearing capacity of the soil on the property - this will help to determine potential future foundation designs required for a new facility.

Insurance Impact:

From an insurance perspective, proceeding with a new Operations Centre at this location requires consideration of whether the property can support construction to the higher standards applied to new, modern municipal facilities, rather than those tolerated for an aging, existing building. Although the site is currently insured, a replacement facility would be assessed as a new risk based on its size, replacement value, operational use, and concentration of assets.

Insurers will focus on the adequacy and reliability of fire protection, water supply, septic capacity, and environmental conditions when determining insurability and setting premiums. The absence of municipal water and sewer services is not, in itself, a barrier; however, the site must be able to accommodate engineered solutions that meet current fire protection and servicing expectations. If the location can support a facility built to these higher standards, insurance coverage would be expected to be available on normal municipal terms. If those standards cannot be achieved, the location may present insurance and cost implications that would need to be addressed before proceeding.

Options

1. Authorize staff to engage the necessary consultants for the plans and studies identified in Report OPS-2026-10 to determine the feasibility of the property for a new Operations Centre (**Recommended**)
2. Do not authorize staff to engage the necessary consultants for the plans and studies identified in Report OPS-2026-10 and provide clear direction on how to determine the feasibility of the property for a new Operations Centre (not recommended)

Capital

Preliminary estimates received from various engineering vendors or record range from \$30,000 - \$75,000 for all necessary plans and studies noted above related to site servicing requirements related to water and septic, fire suppression, and soil suitability. These estimates are preliminary which is why there is such a large range - once a formal scope of work is provided, estimates can be further refined. It is expected that the total cost of the plans and studies will likely result in maximum costs of \$50,000. It is anticipated that the costs of these plans and studies could be funded through the Roads Capital Reserve. These plans and studies costs are capital in nature since they can be directly attributable to the development of the future replacement of a capital asset (i.e., a new Operations Centre).

The Roads Capital Reserve is expected to have a forecasted balance of approx. \$6,588,000 by the end of 2026 and is to be used for the rehabilitation of all roads, bridges, sidewalks, and stormwater systems.

Operations facility replacement has been highlighted over the years however the building replacement was never contemplated in the calculation of the annual funding requirements for roads.

It is important to note that large facility projects will require debenture financing, with any annual principal or interest payments being included in future budgets.

Relevant Policies / Legislation / Resolutions

Resolutions:

- Resolution GC22-23 (Madill Yard)
- Resolution GC4-24 (Building Condition Assessment project)
- Resolution 225-24 (Town Facility Strategic Overview)
- Resolution 213-25 (Feasibility of new Operations Centre)

Council Strategic Direction

- Balanced Growth-1.2: Ensure a continued focus on maintaining and upgrading existing Town infrastructure as part of growth management planning.
- Balanced Growth-1.5: Develop a 20-year Facility Plan to map out the future of key municipal infrastructure.
- Stable, Trusted & Engaged Community Partner-1.1: Align organizational capacity to service delivery needs.
- Stable, Trusted & Engaged Community Partner-2.1: Create, implement, and invest in the Town's Asset Management Plan, including long-term financing strategies.

Consultations

Chris Nagy, Chief Building Official
Michael Parniak, Manager of Engineering Services

Respectfully Submitted: Randy Bissonette, Reva Frame,

Manager Approval (if required): _____

Director Approval: Randy Bissonette, Director of Operations

CAO Approval: Denise Corry, Chief Administrative Officer