

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

July 31, 2024

### **Town of Peace River to upgrade accessibility, emergency response, and civic engagement with new Town Hall building**

**Peace River, AB** – The Town of Peace River is thrilled to announce the purchase of a new Town Hall building, marking a significant step toward enhancing the accessibility, fiscal efficiency, and overall functionality of our municipal services.

Our beloved clocktower Town Hall, originally a provincial building and bank, has served as the heart of Peace River's local government for 50 years. However, its design and infrastructure have increasingly fallen short of meeting municipal needs. Key concerns include a complete lack of accessibility for differently abled residents; insufficient room to effectively interact with and serve the public; and inadequate space to function as a proper Emergency Coordination Centre, which is vital given our region's frequent forest fires and evacuation situations.

Rather than continuing to invest in costly renovations over the coming years to bring the old building up to standard, the decision to purchase a new facility represents a proactive and fiscally prudent choice. This investment ensures that our town's resources are used efficiently and effectively, securing the best possible outcome for the long-term future of Peace River.

In seeking a new building, we made a commitment to remain centrally located for ease of accessibility. The new building, located on Main Street just a block north from our current location, was originally built for the provincial government and is set up to suit the needs of our community far better than our current one.

The new Town Hall will be fully accessible, ensuring that all residents, regardless of their mobility needs, can engage with their local government. As it stands, residents in wheelchairs cannot even attend Council meetings in person.

Importantly, the new building will be able to serve as a robust Emergency Coordination Centre, better preparing us to respond swiftly and effectively to any crises that arise. This capacity is crucial for our community given the increasing demand for coordinated responses to regional emergencies.

The new Town Hall represents a critical investment in the future of Peace River, ensuring that our town has the capacity and infrastructure to serve our citizens effectively, both now and in the years to come.

The Town took possession of the new building July 31, 2024. The purchase price was \$1.05 million and the building is located at 9715 100 ST. Plans to move in are tentatively scheduled for early 2025.

### Quotes

*“Accessibility is a prerequisite for democracy. The new Town Hall building will substantially increase our capacity to function as a government and will be fully accessible to the public and staff. As we bid farewell to our iconic clocktower, we are glad to make this move now and invest in our town’s future.” – **Mayor Elaine Manzer***

*“Our Administration remains committed to fiscal responsibility and forward-looking decision making. We are excited to move to a modern building that can properly serve the public and addresses several municipal needs.” – **Chief Administrative Officer Barb Miller***

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