



Q&A Re Municipal Office Renovation

19 April 2021

What's the problem we're trying to solve?

- **The current facility was reconstructed in 2012 under time and cost pressure, with minimal functional planning or consideration for future requirements.**
- **The office space provided was barely adequate for the existing staff at the time, with no allowance for future staff expansion or flexibility.**
- **The existing office space was not properly configured for the functions to be performed in it or for the comfort and safety of the staff who would occupy it.**

What do we need now that we don't have?

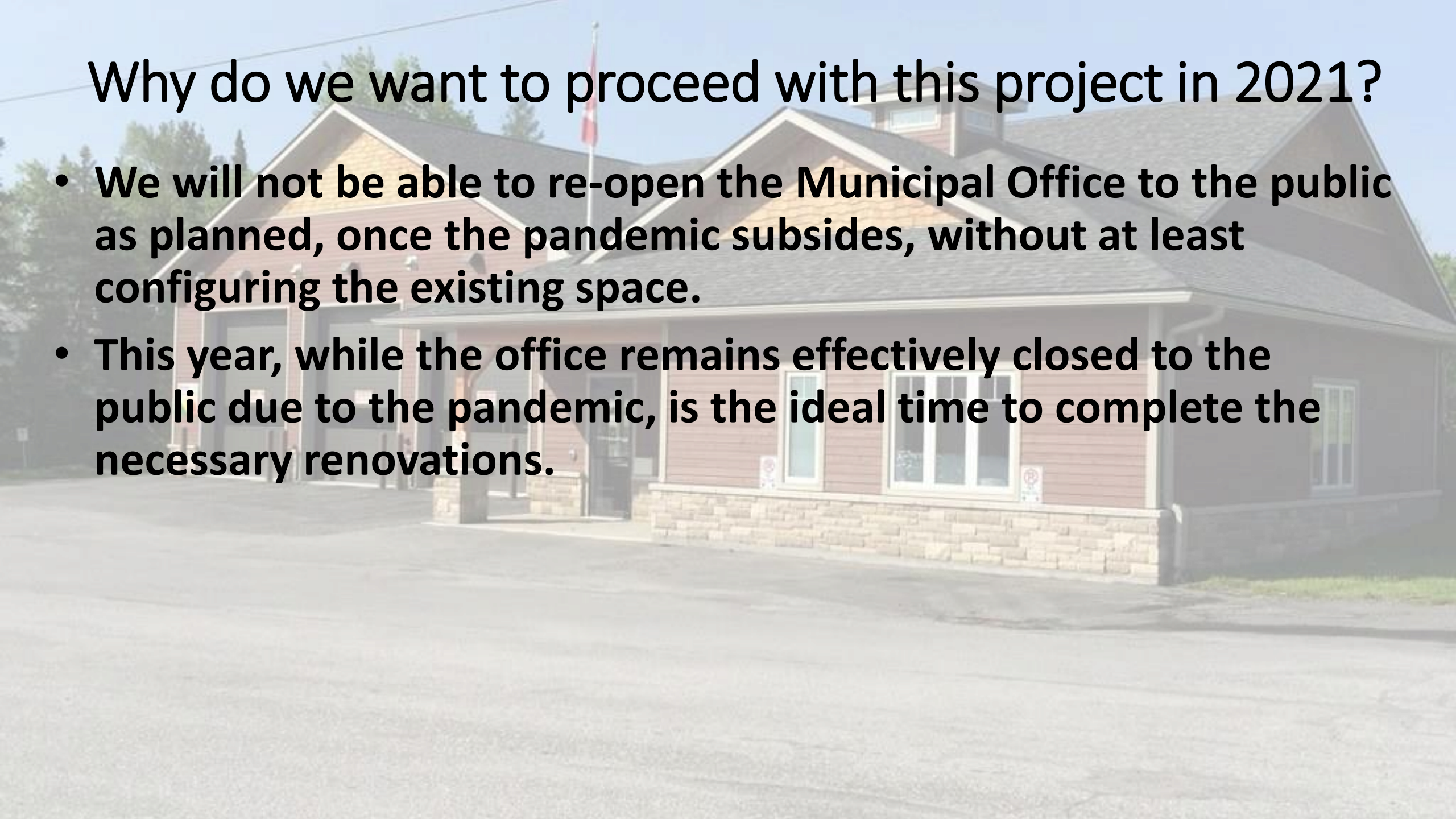
- **Physical separation of space accessible to the public from staff work spaces is required, for health and safety reasons. This requirement will persist for the foreseeable future, even after the pandemic subsides.**
- **Space is required near the entrance to the office for staff to meet confidentially with members of the public to discuss planning, building, and taxation matters without the need to enter the general office space.**
- **The existing staff lunch / break room is inadequate for its intended purpose, and cannot continue to be used for meetings and occasional staff.**
- **Additional space for both permanent and temporary staff will be required as the Municipality assumes greater responsibility for functions such as communications and planning.**

Why can't Municipal staff just work from home?

- **With its minimal staff complement and overlapping of responsibilities, Whitestone can't take advantage of work-from-home like larger organizations with staff specialization can.**
- **Teamwork is essential to staff productivity and to maintaining acceptable levels of customer service. We cannot build a high-performance team without significant staff interaction and collaboration in the workplace.**
- **The Municipality lacks sufficient automation – and associated secure communication and internet capability – of its records and systems to support any significant amount of work-from-home.**

Why do we want to proceed with this project in 2021?

- **We will not be able to re-open the Municipal Office to the public as planned, once the pandemic subsides, without at least configuring the existing space.**
- **This year, while the office remains effectively closed to the public due to the pandemic, is the ideal time to complete the necessary renovations.**



Will proceeding with the Municipal Office renovation jeopardize the expansion of the Nursing Station?

- **No. The proposed 2021 Capital Budget includes an allowance to cover detailed design of expansion to the Whitestone and Area Nursing Station, which is planned to proceed in 2022.**
- **Significant external funding is anticipated for the Nursing Station expansion project through grants from the Ontario Government, contributions from neighbouring municipalities, and proceeds from planned fundraising.**

Where are we in the process of scoping and approving the Municipal Office renovations?

- **Our Task Force met last Friday with the architect / consultant to review the latest plans and cost estimates. We asked her to consider alternatives that would involve reconfiguration of the existing space envelope to meet immediate requirements, but at reduced cost.**
- **The Task Force will meet again to consider revised proposals and cost estimates once they are available (but not likely before May 3rd).**
- **Council will still need to include an amount for this project in its 2021 Capital Budget. Any resulting expenditure will be approved by Council when a contract is ready to be let.**
- **Regardless of the outcome, any necessary funds will be borrowed; so the project will not affect the 2021 tax rate.**