🚒🔥 Bowen Island Firehall 2021 - cost $4M

🏝️ Similar Island communities - Bowen Island and the District of Metchosin

While I was at the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) conference in Vancouver on September 14-18, 2026, I took the time to visit a similar Island community. Bowen Island's new modest Firehall is (almost) perfect for Metchosin. I couldn't figure out how to tele-port or levitate it here, so I took some videos and photos that will be posted in my next 3 posts (with links).

2021 Statistics Canada Census of Population

Bowen Island Key 2021 Core Demographic data Census Details

- Total Population: 4,256 people (2021)
- Private Dwellings: 1,724 occupied dwellings out of 2,036 total private dwellings.
- Land Area: 50.12 square kilometers.
- Population Density: 84.9 people per square kilometer.
- Median Age: 50.0 year

Metchosin Key 2021 Core Demographic data Census Details

- Total Population: 5,067 residents
- Total Private Dwellings: 1,938 total dwellings (with 1,856 occupied by usual residents)
- Land Area: 69.57 square kilometres
- Population Density: 72.8 people per square kilometre
- Median Age: 50.8 years old

Bowen Island Fire Hall and Emergency Operations Centre project started in 2008 with assessments and was completed in 2019 for $4M

One of the municipality's major capital projects. "With more islanders to protect, more volunteer firefighters, more and bigger equipment to house—and modern health, safety and service standards that it simply cannot meet—the old Hall has become deficient and leaves the community at risk".

"In 2017, the Municipality proposed to build a new Fire Hall and Emergency Operations Centre …" it is " a modern facility of sufficient size to meet current and future needs, yet modest and affordable at the same time. The

location and funding were approved in 2017, but delays came about when the project received unfavourable bids that were significantly higher than the available budget. After a review of the project design, the project team refined aspects of the building to bring it closer to the available budget with a reasonable increase. The resulting design is as modest as possible without compromising the minimum operations of the department to address the community need.

Bowen Island Staff applied for grant funding from BC Hydro's Community ReGreening Program for landscaping the property with native and drought tolerant plant species. Later additions included heat pumps and scrubbers. https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/services/bowen-island-fire-rescue/fire-hall/

Similar communities and similar modest budgets. Firechief and A/Fire Chief on Bowen Island who are also builders, thought the project could be completed today for $10-12 Million. The more we wait the more expensive it becomes.

With an additional Bay Area, I am also told that a similar, post-seismic modest, rural, Metchosin cookie cutter approach would cost under $14 Million. Very doable with the $10.4 Million in grants brought in this term under my leadership and with the addition of some of the infrastructure reserve funds. It will be important that this NEW BUILD is built with associated accommodations and necessary wiring, with the understanding of potential future improvements such a solar panels.

Caveat- Important to note that:
While there are demographic similarities, their service level, operational mandate, and overall service provision are materially different from ours in Metchosin. Bowen Island operates at an Interior Service Level, and their call volume and operational demands are also different.
As a result, while there may be aspects of their facility and organizational model that are useful to consider, we should be cautious with comparisons given our broader service mandate. Our operational requirements need to be reflected in any comparison of facilities, staffing, equipment, and future service needs. Worth visiting and considering.

Thank you to Mayor Andrew Leonard, for the invitation to visit your new investment. Much gratitude to Fire Chief Aaron Hanson and Deputy Fire

Chief Ian Thompson, and to our driver and firehall enthusiast Adrian van Lidth de Jeude for the generosity of your time and knowledge. Special thanks to Strategic Initiatives Officer, Kristina Calli for setting up this visit (& making sure I took the correct ferry) and for meeting Metchosin's CAO Bob Payette and I at the UBCM conference on September 16, 2026.