



# NEWS RELEASE

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## City of Penticton budget includes 0% tax increase for third year in a row

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Dec. 17, 2012

**PENTICTON** — Good things come in threes, as the City of Penticton passed on a 0% tax increase to taxpayers for an unprecedented third year in a row after Council adopted the 2013 budget Monday night.

“Holding the line on taxes for a third year is an incredible achievement and shows the City’s dedication to fiscal responsibility,” said Mayor Dan Ashton. “All staff and Council members sharpened their pencils and reviewed this budget line by line to ensure spending is in the best interest of taxpayers as these tough economic times continue.”

This is the third year that the City of Penticton has not increased tax rates, as the 2012 budget included a 0% increase and 2011 featured a 0.5% tax decrease. This direction is in line with the recent Citizen Survey, which indicated 79% of residents recommended the City maintain current levels of service and taxation.

The 2013 budget has also maximized spending to further Council’s strategic priorities that will support community vibrancy and economic development in the years to come. Key initiatives include:

- West Okanagan Lake waterfront enhancement, featuring a multi-use path reconstruction along Lakeshore Drive. This project is fully maximized with grant support, as the City will contribute \$650,000 and gas tax funding will cover \$1.2 million.
- The multi-phase Downtown Penticton revitalization process will begin with \$1.25 million approved to refurbish the Martin Street-Westminster Avenue-Winnipeg Street area. This project will not only create an appealing gateway entrance to the downtown, but support the vibrancy created with the opening of Landmark Cinemas this fall.
- Skaha Lake will benefit with a new playground, which will be constructed in partnership with the community. The South Okanagan Children’s Charity is fundraising to contribute funds toward the “discovery park” concept, and the City has committed \$85,000 to the project.

Social media was used during the five-day budget deliberations as a public engagement tool. Residents were encouraged to provide comments via Twitter using the hashtag #penbudget13, and several questions relating to budget details were handled by staff.

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Contact:  
Simone Blais  
Communications Officer  
250-490-2583  
[simone.blais@penticton.ca](mailto:simone.blais@penticton.ca)