

Over 2,600 have their say about flight changes

(Penticton, BC – April 16, 2019) – A record number of citizens participated in the City’s survey about recent changes to Air Canada’s Vancouver flight service. The City received 2,614 responses from people across the valley including 1,581 from Penticton.

“This is clearly a very important issue not only to Penticton’s business community and residents but to the entire region,” says Director of Development Services, Anthony Haddad. “We had hoped to get 2,000 and are very pleased with the amount and quality of the feedback we have received. Many of the respondents took the time to provide specific detail on the impact these changes will have. We believe it makes a strong case for the early morning flight to Vancouver and the late night return.”

The City and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen offered the survey to formally gather the feedback elected officials and staff members were hearing from residents about recent changes to Air Canada’s service at the Penticton Airport. Some of the key findings from the survey include:

- Participants prefer to fly out of Penticton with 89% choosing the airport because it is close to home.
- The introduction of the Q400 aircraft is welcomed for its larger capacity and ability to land in low cloud conditions.
- The current schedule meets the needs of most participants. 71% of participants rated the current schedule a 7 or more out of 10.
- The Penticton Airport has a stable customer base. More than half of participants travel 4 to 6 times per year or more and have maintained their travel pattern for more than 5 years.
- Participants don’t want to see the 6 am departure to Vancouver and 10:50 pm arrival dropped from the schedule. Over 80% describe these flights as fairly or very important to their travel needs.
- The 6 am flight is particularly important to participants who travel for business with 93% of saying it is fairly or very important. More than 1/3 (or 910) of the responses came from people who travel frequently for business or work.
- Participants expect to reduce their travel through the Penticton Airport as a result of these changes. 61.8% say they will decrease their flights out of Penticton.
- The new schedule does not appear to meet respondents’ needs. More than 57% say that they are not at all or somewhat unlikely to use the first flight of the day at 9:35 am.

- Participants expect to see their travel costs increase as a result of the changes. Over 67% anticipate an additional \$100 to \$300 in costs per trip for hotels, parking, food cabs as well as their time.

“The results affirm the importance of the current schedule to the leisure traveller who needs to make connections but also the business traveller who is trying to get a full day or two of meetings in Vancouver,” says Haddad.

Staff will share the highlights from the survey at the City of Penticton’s Council meeting on April 16. The results are now posted on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca and will be reviewed with Air Canada and other service providers in the coming weeks.

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