

City to present results of shelter survey during April 20 Council meeting

(Penticton, BC – April 19, 2021) – The results of two community surveys, completed March 31 through April 10 for the purpose of formalizing public feedback around Council’s March 2 decision not to renew a temporary use permit for the operation of a winter shelter at 352 Winnipeg Street, will be presented to Council during their upcoming April 20 meeting.

In summary, a general public survey generated 3472 responses and a random sample survey of the City’s 5700 Shape Your City active member database generated 421 responses. Key findings from the surveys include:

- When asked their view of Council’s decision to not extend the permit for the temporary shelter, 64 per cent of the public survey agreed or strongly agreed with this decision compared to 61 per cent of the random sample survey.
- When asked their view of the Provincial Government’s decision to invoke its powers to overrule the decision of Council, 66 per cent of the public survey disagreed or strongly disagreed with this decision compared to 67 per cent of the random sample survey.
- When asked their view of exercising the legal right to challenge the Province in the courts at a potential cost of between \$200,000 and \$300,000, 51 per cent of the public survey agreed or strongly agreed compared to 39 per cent of the random sample survey.
- When asked whether they support Council requesting that BC Premier, John Horgan, intervene with the goal of the Province and the City working together on a solution, 78 per cent of the public survey agreed or strongly agreed compared to 85 per cent of the random sample survey.

“Council will discuss the survey results in detail during tomorrow’s meeting,” said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. “Today I want to thank the thousands of Penticton residents from across the spectrum of our community who answered Council’s call for feedback. The Province’s failure to prioritize feedback has triggered the situation we’re now facing, a situation that pits neighbour against neighbour and government against government. Regardless of your position on this issue, thank you for participating.”

The complete results of both surveys are available on www.shapeyourcitypenticton.ca

During Tuesday's meeting, staff will also present several recommendations for Council to consider as possible next steps. The recommendations include:

- Directing staff to continue to negotiate solutions with the Province, BC Housing, the landlord, and operator to immediately close the 352 Winnipeg Street temporary winter shelter and respectfully transition all 42 current shelter stayers into other housing situations.
- Directing staff to continue to work with the landlord to reduce nuisances and calls-for-service (Bylaw, fire, and RCMP) under the Good Neighbour Bylaw, and for the City to take the appropriate measures to designate 352 Winnipeg Street as a Nuisance Property under the Good Neighbour Bylaw if nuisances and calls-for-service do not immediately stop.
- Directing staff to draft a letter on behalf of the City formally requesting that the BC Premier immediately intervene in the issues around the 352 Winnipeg Street temporary winter shelter, including the Province's intentional acts to contravene Council's two unanimous and lawful decisions not to extend a Temporary Use Permit at 352 Winnipeg Street and the City of Penticton's Zoning Bylaw.
- Directing staff to begin pursuing all injunctive actions available to the City through the courts, with the understanding that this procedure may cost up to \$300,000.

Due to the time needed to compile and review the survey results, both the survey findings and the associated staff report recommendations will appear as a late item on the April 20 Council meeting agenda.

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