

Public Safety reinforcements en route to Penticton for 2022

(Penticton, BC – November 24, 2021) – With a [letter](#) dispatched today to the BC Solicitor General and Minister of Public Safety requesting additional RCMP officers, Penticton City Council has responded to the community's call to action for more investment in protective services by making public safety the top priority of the 2022-2026 Financial Plan.

Following yesterday's conclusion of the annual budget process, work is now underway to implement a suite of investments intended to address safety by boosting the size of Penticton's RCMP detachment by three new police officers (bringing the increase of officers between 2021 and 2022 to seven), adding two new RCMP civilian staff, extending the operational hours and call capacity of the Bylaw Department and adding seven new resources, including five Bylaw Officers, two Community Safety Officers and an additional intake administrator for incoming calls and complaints. These outcomes, along with a full scope of other decisions, were the focus of Council budget deliberations held November 22 through November 23.

"Among the men and women who protect our community from crime, and among the families and businesses whose wellbeing, livelihoods and properties they work to keep safe, all have clearly and consistently said, more needs to occur now to address the disorder along our streets, in our parks and on our properties," said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. "The public safety spending Council has authorized for 2022 is a direct response to this call to action. The added funding will help address the demand for service by allowing more calls for policing and bylaw to be answered and responded to during peak hours, seven days a week. And while it's certainly true that preventing issues like crime require a range of solutions supporting not only enforcement, but also addiction, mental health and barriers across society, the decisions made Tuesday are intended to directly target those individuals who willfully exploit gaps in our system to commit brazen and repeat criminal offenses."

Cost to residents and businesses

For 2022, Council has approved an overall tax increase of 5.7 per cent. In addition, Council approved holding electric rates at 2021 levels. Homeowners will see an average annual increase in municipal taxes and utility fees totaling \$103 for a typical residential property valued at \$469,909 and an average annual increase in municipal taxes and utility fees totaling \$934 for a typical business property valued at \$1,188,696.

The process leading up to the draft 2022-2026 Financial Plan involved six months of preparations, starting in the spring of 2021 and concluding in November with the creation of a [proposed 2022 Corporate Business Plan](#) and draft [2022-2026 Financial Plan](#). Both documents were made available to the community for comment and discussion during the City's annual budget engagement events, held November 7 through November 18, 2021.

The final version of the financial plan containing all revisions requested by Council, will be formally adopted during a Special Council Meeting, to be held in early December.

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