

## Community Safety Resource Review shows lack of provincial investment

(Penticton, BC – December 16, 2022) – The Community Safety Resource Review highlights the City of Penticton’s efforts to deal with the challenges presented by homelessness, mental health and addictions, and prolific offenders but also reveals the need for significant investment in many areas that are in provincial jurisdiction.

“This is a thoroughly detailed review that looks at all aspects of the City’s safety resources - from RCMP to Fire to Bylaw Services - and presents a clear picture that the status quo of the City trying to fill the gaps in services that are a provincial responsibility is not sustainable,” says Anthony Haddad, the general manager of community services for Penticton. “The City has invested significantly over the last five years as we try to meet these challenges and provide a safe and healthy community. The report is unambiguous that we cannot afford to continue to carry the burden.”

According to the report:

- **RCMP cannot proactively serve the community: Penticton continues to have a much higher level of calls for service** and there has been a 56 per cent increase in mental health calls to the RCMP detachment from 2019-2021.
- **The Fire Department has been removed from their core function: More than 50 per cent of calls to the Penticton Fire Department are medical** and many are overdoses, reducing operational readiness.
- **Bylaw and CSO need more enforcement tools: Calls to Bylaw have increased by 243 per cent since 2017.** Community Safety Officers need greater authority and a long-term plan supported by other local and regional agencies who are better equipped to deal with the mental health challenges of their roles.

The report makes 54 recommendations, with many falling outside of municipal jurisdiction.

“The report provides a fact-based foundation as the City of Penticton moves forward,” says Haddad. “This is an ideas report, providing many potential starting points for the municipality and other levels of government. Staff will continue to review the report and take direction from council on what the next steps and how we engage with our provincial partners to ensure Penticton residents are getting the level of service required.”

The staff recommendation is for Council to receive the report and that it form part of Council’s Strategic Planning process around Community Safety

The review was initiated in February 2022 to look at RCMP, Fire and Bylaw operations to determine how resources should be best allocated to meet ongoing demand for services. The review involved

extensive interviews and focus groups with community members and key stakeholder groups as well as a public survey which received 815 responses. The complete findings of the review can be found at [shapeyourcitypenticton.ca/focus-on-safety](https://shapeyourcitypenticton.ca/focus-on-safety). Paper copies can also be viewed at the Penticton Public Library and City Hall.

Residents who would like to learn more about the report are invited to attend one of two Online Information Sessions in early January. The sessions will be held on January 10 and 12, 2023 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Register in advance at [shapeyourcitypenticton.ca/focus-on-safety](https://shapeyourcitypenticton.ca/focus-on-safety).

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