

Public safety and housing focus of draft 2025 budget

(Penticton, BC – October 15, 2024) – The 2025-2029 draft Financial and Corporate Business Plan proposes the hiring of two more police officers to create a Community Safety Unit, expansion of the Remote Guard Camera Program, a Fire Inspector within the Fire Prevention Division, the creation of a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan and a continued focus on affordable housing options.

"The proposed budget reflects Council's commitment to ensuring Penticton is both Safe & Resilient and a Livable & Accessible community," says Angela Campbell, the city's director of finance and administration. "Using Council's refocused priorities, the draft financial plan presents investments in those key areas, maintains the service levels the public expects and continues the City's commitment to fiscal sustainability."

The proposed 2025 increase includes the final year of the tax deferral that was introduced in 2022 and supported a significant increase in public safety investments which equates to 3.06 per cent. The remaining increase of 5.52 per cent is comprised of inflationary costs of 2.9 per cent, and strategic initiatives designed to support Council's priorities of 2.62 per cent, bringing the total increase for 2025 to 8.63 per cent. This equates to an extra \$15 a month for the average residential taxpayer. The City's 2025 capital budget is estimated at \$31.3 million.

"We know that people continue to face rising costs for their household or business budgets and the City's operations are impacted by those as well," says Campbell. "During this process, staff worked meticulously to strike a balance between targeted investments that advance key priorities while working to keep expanded costs down. Staff also underwent a rigorous line-by-line review process which included adjusting our budget methodology to help offset the impacts of inflationary costs."

Other items included in this year's proposed budget include:

- Advancement of the future Community Safety Building for RCMP Community Policing/Bylaw Services and the Fire Hall renewal plan that includes a newly constructed Fire Hall #2 at Dawson Avenue and the transition of Fire Hall #1 to a satellite hall at Nanaimo Avenue
- Support for housing affordability with the creation of an affordable housing incentive policy, development of housing on City-owned land, area plans for Transit Oriented Areas and implementing the Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan (SHIP)
- Expansion of the Frost Fest Winter Carnival in January 2025 to increase vibrancy, attract visitors and support a connected community
- Replacement of both the Lakawanna Playground and Splash Park which are both at end of life
- Progression of the City's recently adopted Urban Forest Master Plan
- Continued investment in aging utility infrastructure

The full proposed 2025 Financial and Corporate Business Plan, including a complete listing of all the capital spending, utility costs and other expenditures, is available at www.penticton.ca/2025-budget

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One Backgrounder attached:

How can I participate?

- Beginning October 15, read the details of the draft 2025-2029 Financial Plan and 2025 Budget on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca or at City Hall and provide your feedback online or via hardcopy feedback form.
- Drop by the Council Open House on October 29 at the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to meet with Council, discuss the budget and share your thoughts with staff. Kids are welcome!
- Once you have reviewed the materials and asked your questions, complete a form to share your feedback about the budget between October 15 and November 6.

The feedback gathered will be shared with Council at the start of budget deliberations which start on November 19th. All information about the budget and opportunities to get involved and share feedback are at shapeyourcitypenticton.ca. Feedback will be collected until November 6, 2024.

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