

Collaborative approach to public safety shows dividends

(Penticton, BC – November 1, 2024) – The City's commitment to creating a safe and resilient community continues to show results, according to the latest quarterly updates.

A key component is the enhanced collaboration between the City's public safety organizations.

"The RCMP and Bylaw Services have recently begun sharing intelligence to enhance their hot spot patrols," writes Julie Czeck, the City's director of public safety and partnerships "In Q3, Bylaw conducted close to 1,300 proactive patrols in identified hot spots, in addition to the time dedicated by police. Hot spots are determined through data analysis of crime and bylaw reports and community feedback, aiming to deter criminal activity, increase law enforcement visibility, and engage residents."

Czeck notes Bylaw Services also collaborated with social sector partners to improve safety in certain hot spots. For instance, the relocation of a fence has allowed for quicker Bylaw responses on public property, facilitating timely interventions. Additionally, working with BC Transit, a bus stop was moved to reduce congregation and improve safety for transit users.

Another highlight introduced this quarter was joint patrols by RCMP and Bylaw Services in public spaces where individuals experiencing homelessness have sought overnight shelter. The collaboration provides a coordinated approach to managing these areas, supporting the City in clearing public spaces while adhering to case law that allows overnight sheltering between 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. when adequate shelter options are not available.

Statistics from the RCMP show an overall downward trend year-on-year in property crimes and a small increase in violent crimes.

Superintendent Beth McAndie says the increase can be understood by looking at various factors in the data.

"In summary, the increase in assaults and intimate partner violence is driven by a combination of intimate relationship conflicts, substance use, known-party conflicts, and youth group-related violence," she writes, noting that intimate partner violence accounted for 23 per cent all reported assaults and 58 per cent involved individuals previously known to each other.

In terms of property crime, McAndie says a spike in break and enters was a result of a group operating in the area during this time.

The report also noted progress on the Affordable Housing Reserve Pilot Funding Program which was launched in April, Social Development, alongside Development Services department, have processed

two applications from local non-profits, with more applications expected to come in soon. This program is a key mechanism for the City to support non-profit housing providers to get social housing opportunities to a shovel-ready state, and well-positioned for future capital housing grants and programs.

The full reports are available at www.penticton.ca/agendas

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Media Contact:

250-490-2339

communications@penticton.ca