



Council Report

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Date: February 11, 2025 **File No:**
To: Anthony Haddad, City Manager
From: Julie Czeck, Director of Public Safety and Partnerships and Jamie Lloyd-Smith, Social Development Specialist
Subject: Q4 2024 Public Safety and Partnerships Division Updates

Staff Recommendation

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated February 11, 2025, titled "Q4 Public Safety and Partnerships Division Updates".

Executive Summary

This report is divided into four key sections:

1. Part 1 – Public Safety Partnerships
2. Part 2 – Bylaw Operational Updates
3. Part 3 – Director's Year in Review – Modernizing Bylaw Services
4. Part 4 – Social Development Updates

Strategic priority objective

Safe & Resilient: The City of Penticton will enhance and protect the safety of all residents and visitors to Penticton.

Background

PART 1 - PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Community Investment** – "Movember" is an annual event where participants grow moustaches during November to raise awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide. This year's campaign featured a friendly contest between the Bylaw and Fire Departments, raising nearly \$2,000. Additionally, the "Cram the Cruiser" event involved the Penticton RCMP, Community Policing, Fire Department, Bylaw Department, Search and Rescue, Canada Border Services Agency, and BC Corrections, who gathered at the Real Canadian Superstore parking lot to collect donations for the local food bank. The goal of 1,000 lbs of food was surpassed, with a total of 2,700 lbs collected, in addition to \$1,700 in donations. The RCMP also led a "Cram the Kennel" event in support of food donations for the SPCA.

- **Integrated Communications on Holiday Safety Messaging** – The City’s Communications team worked collaboratively across the Public Safety Division to deliver an integrated safety campaign for the holiday season. The campaign included seven short-form videos on topics including fire safety, impaired driving, theft from vehicles, porch pirates, holiday parking and residential safety tips while away for the holidays. This campaign was shared across all City social media channels (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn) and included print ads in local newspapers. The community responded favourably to this campaign as it garnered great engagement. The most-viewed video on YouTube was the Porch Pirates video, with a record 20,000+ views. Additionally, the Porch Pirates video was the top public safety video on Facebook and Instagram in December, reaching more than 45,000 people combined. These integrated campaigns are an integral part of the public safety strategic direction as they encourage community discourse and raise awareness about the work being done to improve safety and livability of Penticton.
- **Multi-Agency Response to Public Safety:** Bylaw officers participated in an RCMP watch briefing for a coordinated Halloween response to fireworks issues. New joint bylaw patrols have also been conducted with the South Okanagan Women In Need Society (SOWINS), with plans to expand to other social serving agencies. There were 5,785 proactive bylaw patrols in hot spots, with 232 RCMP hours dedicated to problem areas.
- **Council Open House** – Senior City staff joined Council members at the October 29th, 2024 Open House to speak to community residents about 2025 Budget Priorities. In collaboration with the Communications Team, the PSP Division launched a survey, to better understand resident safety, experiences, and ideas for improving safety in our neighbourhoods. The survey was open for 1 month and saw over 1,800 responses. The results of the survey will be presented in a separate report in March 2024 in partnership with the Communications team.
- **Council Tours of Shelter and Supportive Housing Facilities** – Staff worked with 100 More Homes to organize tours for Council of shelter and supportive housing facilities in Penticton, joined by social sector partners including Ask Wellness, Penticton and District Society for Community Living, and Penticton and Area Overdose Prevention Society. A second phase of planning is underway to tour recovery-based services and affordable housing in Penticton.

A FOCUS ON EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- **2024/2025 Temporary Winter Shelter:** Staff collaborated extensively with 100 More Homes to develop the 2024/2025 Temporary Winter Shelter plan in Penticton, involving key organizations such as the RCMP, City Bylaw, Penticton Fire Department, Interior Health, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Penticton Industrial Development Association (PIDA), supplemented by private security for 24/7 oversight. The primary objectives are to ensure safety, cleanliness, and coordinated risk management, with each partner contributing specific resources and responsibilities tracked through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). A separate report is being presented to Council on key shelter updates from the 2024/25 season.

- **Situation Table Re-Set:** The Province has provided \$30,000 to re-establish that the Situation Table, including training and capacity building. Re-establishing Penticton’s Situation Table will enable front-line service providers to proactively identify vulnerable people and families at imminent risk of harm or victimization and rapidly connect them to services before they experience a negative or traumatic event (e.g. overdose, eviction, crime etc.). Staff are working with 100 More Homes, RCMP, Bylaw and service agencies on fulfilling the privacy impact assessment and coordination agreements prior to joint-training in the Spring of 2025.
- **Youth Advocacy Centers** provide coordinated, multidisciplinary approaches to address the needs of children, youth and their families who have been victims or witnesses of crime. In Q4, public safety partners and community organizations convened to discuss initiating a feasibility study with support of the provincial Child Advocacy Network. Further partner meetings to be done in Q1.

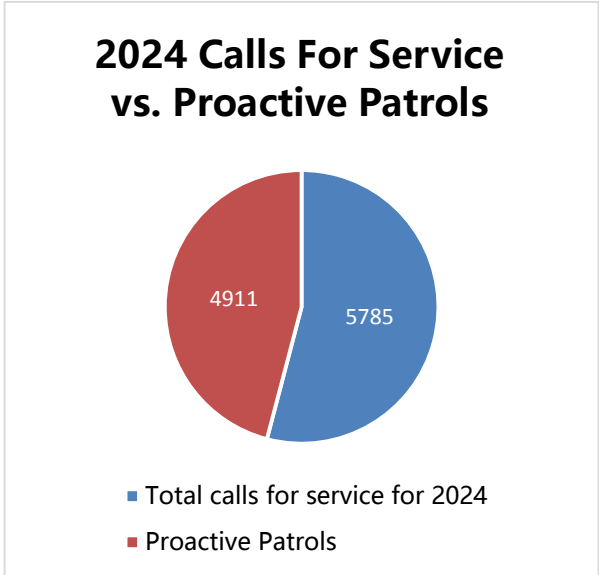
A FOCUS ON PROPERTY ISSUES

- **A Property Standards Compliance Team (PSCT)** has been a shared desire for exploration between the PSP and the RCMP for several months. The PSCT will launch in Q1 2025 and is a multi-agency enforcement team including the RCMP’s Crime Reduction Unit, Bylaw Services, Fire, and the City’s Building Inspection Services. This team aims to enhance community health, safety, and security by addressing properties that negatively impact the surrounding area, pose risks to tenants and residents, create significant workloads for City services, and have not improved through the traditional efforts of one agency alone. Properties are assessed based on history, complexity, impact, and severity, ensuring a comprehensive approach to enforcement.
- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design** - As part of our ongoing commitment to community safety, we are collaborating with the RCMP Community Policing Team on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) initiatives. In Q3 the Bylaw Services Department sent two Bylaw officers for training, enabling them to become certified CPTED evaluators. In Q4, bylaw staff in collaboration with Community Policing completed 4 CPTEDs – and there are currently two additional underway.
- **Downtown Penticton Business Improvement Association Camera Program Expansion**- Initially a pilot project to deter crime, the Downtown Penticton camera program has been approved for city-wide expansion in Budget 2025 in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce. A working group of key representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, BIA, PIDA, the City, RCMP, Bylaw, Fire, and a social sector partner from 100MH has begun to meet to plan the expansion, shifting to quarterly meetings once implemented. The program will prioritize areas with high service calls to RCMP, Fire, or Bylaw, using a data-driven approach.

PART 2 – BYLAW SERVICES DEPARTMENT
OPERATIONAL UPDATES

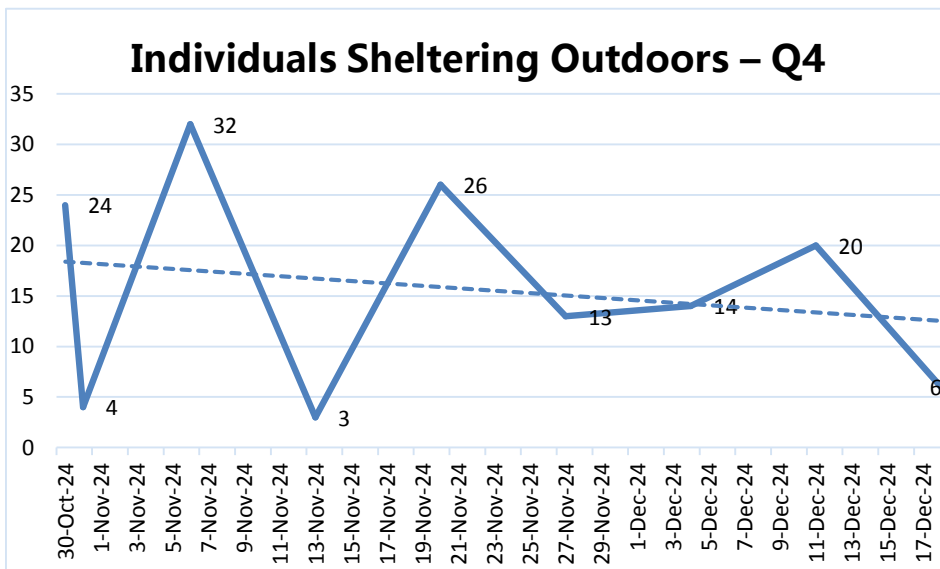
In 2024, there were 10,696 service interactions, including calls for service and proactive patrols, compared to 8,211 calls for service in 2023. Calls for service are complaint-driven, while proactive patrols are initiated by officers without a complaint. Before August 2024, pro-active responses or hot spot patrols were combined with calls for service and not tracked separately. These types of calls will be tracked separately moving forward.

In 2024, most calls for service to the Bylaw Department were related to the Safe Public Spaces Bylaw – with approximately 63% of total calls being social in nature. The Department received numerous calls regarding encampments and wellness checks. Traffic and nuisance property/good neighbour concerns were also significant and will be a focus of our initiatives in 2025.



As of October 2024, the Bylaw Department began tracking the number of individuals sheltering outdoors. The opening of the 40-bed Temporary Winter Shelter in mid-November led to a decrease in the number of individuals sheltering outdoors. The Fairview encampment is not included in these figures, as it falls outside of City limits; though it is noted that approximately 15-20 structures are present there at any given time.

Since the shelter opened in mid November, Bylaw Services has counted an average of 15 people sheltering outdoors within city limits between mid November and end of December, 2024. This is a weekly point in time count and only includes individuals that Bylaw Services interacted with, and these numbers are expected to rise significantly with warmer weather. Tracking will continue to understand the evolving nature of mobility among the unhoused community in Penticton.



In 2024, the Bylaw Services Department issued 6,640 parking tickets, a slight increase from 6,407 in 2023. Revenue from these tickets was approximately \$124,079.34, down about 5% from \$130,245 in 2023. In Q4 2024, revenue was \$41,390 compared to \$44,465 in 2023.

Of the 6,640 tickets issued in 2024, 396 tickets were disputed, representing 6% of the total issued. Among the disputed tickets, 147 stood as issued, 182 resulted in warnings, and 66 were voided. Reasons for voiding included hardship, technical or mechanical issues, disputant errors, or officer error.

PART 3 – YEAR IN REVIEW – THE PATH TO MODERNIZING BYLAW SERVICES

With new leadership at the City, including a former provincial senior leader, as the Director of Public Safety and Partnerships and a former Chief of Police as the new Manager of Bylaw Services, there was a strong desire to review the Department's history, challenges, and strengths. This review aimed to make informed decisions on modernizing the Department to effectively meet the needs of Penticton's residents in a complex and evolving social context.

This review provides a comprehensive third-party analysis by HelpSeeker Technologies of Penticton's Bylaw Services social calls (from 2019-2024) and provides insights derived from analyzing a random sample of 5,000 case files (from 20,000 files) through AI-driven data analytics.

Staff supplemented this learning through engagements with key community partners, informational interviews with other municipalities dealing with similar challenges, and a review of evolving public safety legislation, as it relates to the provision of bylaw services in today's evolving public safety landscape. The outcomes of this review provide the Bylaw Services Department with operational strategies for modernization that contribute to community safety.

What We Learned from the Data

A random sample of approximately 5,800 social calls from a pool of 25,000 files (representing 25%) of all calls (2019 - September 2024) was analyzed, offering key insights into service demands:

- **Seasonal Substance Use Peaks:** Substance-related calls show significant seasonal variation, with mid-year spikes up to 2.5 times higher than in winter months. Peak season is between April and August and this period represents the highest demand, with a nearly 150% increase in calls from the lowest point in January in some years. This trend signals the need for time-sensitive, flexible resource planning.
- **Escalating Mental Health Needs:** Mental health-related calls have risen significantly, from 2 to 5 per month in 2020 to 25 to 28 per month in 2024. This trend indicates an increasing community reliance on Bylaw Services for support during mental health crises. This underscores the need for enhanced collaboration with mental health services and specialized training to equip bylaw staff to respond effectively and ensure residents receive appropriate care. It is important to highlight that the new RCMP Integrated Crisis Response Team (ICRT) – implemented January 2024 – are called for more complex or escalated situations, but Bylaw Services interacts daily with individuals suffering from mental health challenges and are available longer hours and more days of the week.
- **Rising Homelessness:** Homelessness-related calls remain consistently high in 2024, averaging 40-55 per month. This trend aligns with a 54% increase in Penticton's homeless population from 108 in 2018

to 166 in 2023 (Point-in-Time Count, BC Housing). This rise underscores an urgent need for expanded social development interventions, supportive housing, and specialized services.

- **Resource-Intensive Issues:** Calls regarding homelessness and encampments demand significant resources, with each encampment case typically requiring 2.2 to 2.9 visits. This high engagement level strains operational capacity and diverts resources from other proactive work, including revenue-generating activities. As encampment management becomes more time-intensive, this change highlights the operational impact of complex cases.
- **Use of Public Spaces:** Persistent challenges in public spaces, such as overnight sheltering and loitering, remain top concerns for municipalities. Additionally, case law has reinforced municipalities' responsibility to regulate public spaces in a manner that balances community safety and individual rights. As such, it is essential for municipalities to reflect these legal precedents in their parks or public space bylaws, ensuring that their regulations are both effective and legally sound.
- **Emerging Challenges:** Emerging challenges in public spaces are becoming increasingly apparent. Reports of public overnight sheltering are on the rise in the data, reflecting growing community concerns over homelessness and the associated impact on public space usage. Additionally, park and beach misuse, combined with resident safety concerns, adds complexity to service demands.
- **Data and Reporting Enhancements Needed:** While call categories collected by the Department provide some insights, they are too broad to fully support targeted analysis. This is why the research team opted to rely on the officer case notes. There is a need for a refined categorization framework to improve quantitative data accuracy and guide more specific analysis of data moving forward. Additionally, upgrading data systems to capture detailed call-to-resolution timelines will strengthen resource allocation, performance tracking, and the development of key performance indicators (KPIs). This will help build a more robust foundation for understanding complex social issues, which have grown in scope and complexity over the past five years across many municipalities.
- **Greater Complexity:** Cases have become 5 times more complex, with co-occurring issues like homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges, requiring more intensive resource allocation. Case complexity was determined using a survey provided to bylaw officers, which asked them to rank scenarios with factors such as call duration, the number of staff members involved, the need for interagency coordination (e.g., with social services or law enforcement), and the level of specialized response required (e.g., mental health support or substance use intervention). Complexity scores were developed based on bylaw officer's rankings of scenarios provided and retroactively applied against the 5800 files that were analyzed. This component of the analysis was not intended to draw a firm statistical conclusion, rather it aimed to capture the subjective experience of bylaw officers with their day-to-day work as it relates to social calls – though there is recognition that social issues have become more complex with factors like the toxic drug crisis, decriminalization, post-pandemic mental health challenges etc. This increase in case complexity underscores the need for strategic staff training and optimized resource deployment to prevent burnout, as well as partnership with health and social sector partners who have a direct mandate and specialized training to support people in crisis.

What We Learned from Community Engagements

Business input was gathered from local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Penticton Business Improvement Association, Penticton Industrial Development Association, and a select group of business owners in the industrial area, focusing on public safety and economic impacts. Insights were

also gathered from social-service providers involved with 100 More Homes on interagency coordination and support gaps. Additionally, discussions with RCMP senior leaders addressed collaboration and jurisdictional challenges.

Across all groups, there was a consensus on the need for a more integrated and collaborative approach to community safety. Participants stressed the importance of addressing root causes of social challenges—such as homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use—through a combination of enforcement, support services, and provincial advocacy. Many participants highlighted the potential for officers to play a pivotal role in bridging gaps between enforcement and social services, provided it receives the necessary resources and strategic alignment.

Business Representatives

- Business representatives emphasized the growing concern over the economic and operational impacts of social challenges, particularly in the downtown and industrial areas. They highlighted challenges such as vandalism, theft, and loitering, which not only affect their day-to-day operations but also contribute to a broader perception of community safety issues.
- While many supported the role of the department, they expressed a desire for enhanced visibility, faster response times, and a stronger focus on prevention strategies.
- There was also a call for clearer communication and collaboration between bylaw services and the business community to address safety concerns proactively.

People with Lived Experience

- Individuals with lived experience of homelessness provided critical insights into barriers they face in accessing services and shelter, such as wait lists, a need for more affordable housing, and access to basic needs.
- Of note, only two people agreed to talk to the research team. 100 More Homes helped facilitate the conversations with people who have experienced homelessness through their Lived Experience Advisory membership. The two people interviewed reported feeling targeted or stigmatized by historical CSO enforcement practices, emphasizing the importance of balancing enforcement with support services. Participants highlighted the need for better coordination between bylaw services and outreach workers to connect individuals with housing, mental health, and addiction supports.

Social Sector Organizations

- Social service providers pointed to significant gaps in interagency coordination and the need for consistent communication channels.
- They highlighted challenges in accessing sufficient resources for housing and mental health support, stressing that these deficiencies often leave bylaw services addressing issues beyond their mandate.
- Some also advocated for officers to strengthen their role as a connector between social services and individuals in crisis.
- Service providers also noted that uniformed officers can often present as intimidating or overly authoritative for people who have experienced trauma.

RCMP Senior Leaders

- RCMP representatives identified overlapping social challenges and emphasized the need for clearer role delineation between police and bylaw officers. They also identified the need for better fit in hiring and providing clear training and instructions to officers to not overstep their lawful authority.
- Discussions also highlighted the need for improved data sharing and coordination between law enforcement and bylaw services to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts.

What We Learned from Other Municipalities

A list of questions was developed and discussed with eight municipalities—Victoria, Saanich, Maple Ridge, Kamloops, Nelson, Nanaimo, Kelowna, and Surrey—selected for their CSO programs or social issues bylaw teams. The Metro Vancouver Transit Police, known for their well-defined CSO Program, were also contacted. The questions focused on operational aspects such as mandates, roles, authority, performance metrics, organizational structure, training, collaboration with non-profits, officer well-being, and bylaw enforcement related to public spaces and social nuisance issues. The findings revealed significant variation in mandates, operational standards, and authorities. The jurisdictional review identifies effective strategies and recurring challenges faced by BC municipalities, providing valuable insights to inform Penticton’s approach to adapting its Bylaw Services.

Successful Strategies	Common Challenges
<p>Collaborative Frameworks: Multi-agency teams, shared resources, and integrated service models provide cohesive responses to complex cases, especially those involving social challenges. By coordinating efforts across agencies, municipalities can address issues holistically and ensure more comprehensive support for affected populations.</p> <p>Proactive Interventions: Early warning systems, preventive patrols, and community education initiatives help reduce reliance on reactive enforcement by addressing the root causes of common issues. This approach minimizes the occurrence of incidents and strengthens community resilience.</p> <p>Resource Optimization: Flexible staffing models, shared equipment, and joint training programs enhance operational efficiency, allowing municipalities to maintain high service levels while effectively managing budget constraints.</p> <p>Day Spaces: Designating specific day spaces for vulnerable populations provide a safe, supportive environment where people can access essential services during the day. This strategy reduces the need for enforcement actions related to loitering or use of public spaces, alleviating pressure on public spaces and promoting positive community interactions.</p>	<p>Resource Constraints: Limited budgets, staffing shortages, and equipment needs are recurring issues that affect service delivery and response times.</p> <p>Jurisdictional Issues: Restricted authority over criminal matters, overlap with police responsibilities, and coordination challenges with the RCMP limit bylaw effectiveness, particularly in areas requiring criminal enforcement.</p> <p>Public Relations: Managing community expectations, overcoming communication barriers, and building trust are essential for communities with high social-support demands.</p>

What We Learned from Evolving Legislation

Throughout the Province of British Columbia Community Safety Officers (CSOs) operate under two distinct models: those engaged in tiered policing (Special Municipal Constables) and those functioning within the bylaw enforcement framework.

These models differ significantly in their levels of authority, which is crucial to understand, especially in Penticton, where there has historically been confusion regarding the capacity of Bylaw Services to offer a "quasi-policing" response, which is not possible within a bylaw services framework.

The second type of Community Safety Officer (CSO) model is beginning to take shape through recent amendments to the Police Act, specifically with the introduction of Bill 17, The Police Amendment Act, 2024. This legislation, which received Royal Assent on April 25, 2024, introduces the concept of tiered policing by allowing different levels of duties to be assigned to appropriately trained professionals called "Safety Officers."

Prior to Bill 17, the term "Safety Officer" existed in various forms across multiple municipalities but lacked an official designation. Under Bill 17, this role is now clearly defined. However, the bill's implementation depends on forthcoming regulations, and the province has yet to establish a timeline for this process. Once fully developed, the implementation will involve provincial oversight by the Independent Investigations Office of BC (IIO), standardized training, operating procedures, and possibly specific uniforms.

Currently, under the current Police Act, only municipalities with their own police forces—not those policed by the RCMP—can implement tiered policing. Specifically, in these municipalities there is an ability to have a "middle" tier that does not currently exist within RCMP jurisdictions – through Special Municipal Constable (SMC) status.

Special Municipal Constables (SMCs) may carry different titles, such as Community Safety Officers, however, their authority is rooted in the Police Act, allowing them to carry out low-risk policing duties. These duties can include assisting with traffic control, managing large community events, and responding to low risk calls and public safety incidents, provided they have received the proper training. This is why, in places like Nelson or Saanich, Community Safety Officers (CSOs) are empowered to handle lower-level criminal matters under the Police Act.

The changes the Province is bringing forward through Bill 17 seek to enable municipalities under RCMP jurisdiction to implement similar tiered policing models. However, until this change is put into effect, municipalities like Penticton are limited to either an RCMP response or a Bylaw response - not a tiered policing response. The term "Community Safety Officer Program" in this context can be misleading, as it may imply a tiered policing structure, without the authority to deliver on its expectation. Titles in other jurisdictions include simply Bylaw Officers, Bylaw & Community Standards Officers, or Bylaw & Community Service Officers (a title other than CSO). This reflects the proper authority of bylaw officers who address social issues, which remains rooted in the Community Charter, not the Police Act.

Using the emerging best practices from other jurisdictions, as of August 2024 Penticton transitioned to an integrated operational bylaw unit – with an expectation for cross-training and service delivery across all bylaw enforcement activities, including social nuisance calls. This always supports better service delivery and

coverage, as well as mitigates burnout from dealing with repeated complex social issues. Work is also underway to strengthen the integration with RCMP, Fire and/or social sector for the most complex calls.

How We are Modernizing Bylaw Services Based on This Collective Learning

<p style="text-align: center;">Operational Enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-Training for comprehensive skill development across all bylaw disciplines • Refining standard operating procedures • Rotational assignments for skill diversification • Promoting mental health and wellness initiatives for officers • Joint training opportunities (ie. de-escalation training) with key partners • Develop data literacy and a data driven culture in service delivery • Integrating cultural competency and trauma informed practice into core training • Seasonal staffing adjustments to meet peak service demands 	<p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Enhancements (Looking In)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Compliance – reviewing and updating bylaws to respond to evolving legal frameworks/requirements • Role clarity – reflecting our integrated/cross-trained model • Enhancing data tracking protocols and Key Performance Indicators for all new and existing initiatives • Equipment modernization – explore new software, laptops in cars, improved communication systems 	<p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Enhancements (Looking Out)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multi-agency teams/initiatives from the RCMP, healthcare, and social services to enable holistic responses (i.e. Situation Table). • Continue to support social development initiatives that address the underlying causes of social challenges. • Enhance Public Communication and Transparency through education campaigns and online resources to address community confusion about bylaw processes. • Integrate Bylaw Services within a broader Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. • Explore the viability of tiered policing when Bill 17 comes into effect.
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The comprehensive analysis of Penticton's Bylaw Services highlights a department at a pivotal point, grappling with growing demands driven by complex social issues while constrained by clearly defined legal frameworks. The proposed roadmap for modernization takes a phased approach, balancing immediate needs with long-term goals. Early will prioritize foundational improvements and basic data collection and technology upgrades, setting the stage for more comprehensive investments in advanced systems and staffing aligned with future budget cycles.

PART 4 – SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

The Social Development Framework, adopted in 2023, has 47 actions within the 6 key priorities of the department: Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health & Wellness Supports, Supports for People Who Use Substances, Childcare and Food Security. In addition, there are 10 key actions around the governance of the department to ensure that Social Development upholds its principles and takes a systems-integration approach to local planning. Taken together, these initiatives have been supported through approximately \$3.1M of grant funding that is currently being managed by Social Development. While some of these actions remain in progress, it is important to note that not one action took place without meaningful relationships with community partners.

Childcare

Power St Childcare Project: The City successfully worked with the Province to secure additional funding to meet inflationary capital demands for the Power St Childcare at the Community Centre. In partnership with the operator – the YMCA of the Southern Interior – preliminary construction of the facility has begun with an

anticipated finishing date of late 2025. To date, it is anticipated that Penticton is on track to meet 60% of the 722 net new spaces needed according to the Child Care Action Plan.

Housing Integration: Childcare integration into affordable housing has been a focus of conversation, particularly as it relates to workforce housing. As staff have begun engaging community partners on the Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan, a key focus has been seeking opportunities to co-locate childcare spaces and providers in new builds.

Food Security

Food Infrastructure: Social Development has continued to partner with the Community Foundation of the Okanagan Similkameen (CFSOS) and United Way BC by jointly hosting collaborative meetings with key social sector partners who are offering and providing food services for residents. In Q4 this collective group of partners beginning implementing \$70,000 from the UWBC Critical Food Infrastructure Grant to invest in local food infrastructure across many organizations.

South Okanagan Similkameen Food Security Summit: Social Development supported the CFSOS and participated in a regional day-long Food Security Summit in October. Social Development is supporting the CFSOS in next steps as it involves the formalization of an action plan to build a sustainable, resilient and equitable food system in Penticton. Social Development is supporting the CFSOS in next steps as it involves the formalization of an action plan to build a sustainable, resilient and equitable food system in Penticton. In order to learn more about food hubs, Social Development staff connected with the Community Food Centre in Nelson.

Housing

Affordable Housing Reserve Pilot Funding Program: Following the launch of the Affordable Housing Reserve Pilot Funding Program in April (Council Resolution 64-2024), Social Development, alongside Development Services department, processed three applications from local non-profits, with more suspected applications coming in Q1 and Q2 of 2025. 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.

Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan: Getting Council's endorsement to look at three city-owned properties for social housing focused for youth, seniors and workforce housing led to the beginning work of creating a local Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan in partnership with 100 More Homes. Following the collaborative partner workshop in Q3, staff organized two half-day engagement sessions with over 30 participants, staff completed the final draft of a Social Housing Needs Assessment of data to understand the full-scope of non-market housing needs to complement the City's Housing Needs Assessment. This assessment will be completed in Q1 of 2025 as part of the Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan.

Homelessness

Cold Weather Response: In addition to the collaborative divisional efforts to support the Temporary Winter Shelter, Social Development supported 100MH in sharing resources for other vulnerable individuals, including seniors and families on information for daytime warming centers available throughout the winter season.

Youth Homelessness Planning: Social Development participated in youth homelessness planning with the 100 More Homes Youth Action Table Sub-committee. The current focus of community efforts are focused on youth emergency safe suites and building out a suite of youth housing options. Following Council's Resolution to explore city-owned land for workforce, seniors and youth housing needs (Council Resolution 185-2024), staff are exploring ways to incorporate youth-specific housing options on city-land. This includes various conversations with different levels of government, including Interior Health, Ministry of Children and Families and BC Housing on what funding models exist to support these programs.

Supports for People Who Use Substances

Community Action Team Research: The Penticton Community Action Team (CAT) is a local team of partners to coordinate on-the-ground support to prevent overdoses. These teams exist in several communities across the province and funded by the provincial government. They provide support and services to people who use drugs and reduce the risk of illicit drug toxicity deaths in communities hit hardest by the overdose crisis. Penticton's CAT has been working on what is called the 'Penticton Substance Use System Change Project,' in the effort to understand the current service pathways for people using substances. The project had 2 key goals: (1) to understand the scope of services available in Penticton across the substance use continuum (ie. prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement), and (2) to understand how accessible those services are.

The CAT underwent research and engagements both with social and health organizations, as well as with people with lived and living experience to understand what improvements were needed. The key findings of this project are summarized in Attachment A. There were a total of 14 gaps identified within the current system, many of the themes touching on the need for more long-term treatment, better service pathways and barrier free options to support. As part of the next steps with this project, the CAT is currently collaborating with 100 More Homes to explore co-located local services for greater efficiency and service delivery.

Mental Health and Wellness Supports

Building Safer Communities Fund: The department has continued to facilitate the distribution of funds in the community for at-risk youth, working with Oonkanane Friendship Center, the YMCA of the South Okanagan, Foundry Penticton and BC Transit. The department has also begun to work with Community Policing to involve them in this project for the benefit of at-risk youth in the community.

Free Youth Transit Pass: As part of the Building Safer Community Fund, the Free Youth Transit Pass program aims to reduce the barriers for youth accessing services which enhance their mental wellness and sense of community belonging. Due to the success of the program, the program was extended for a full year in 2025 in Q4.

Indigenous Events: Taking a collaborative role with local Indigenous partners to celebrate and bring awareness and understanding of Truth and Reconciliation has been a key component of the department's work in addressing the mental well-being of our First Nations, Metis and Inuit community members, as well as allies. The Social Development Department collaborated with Penticton Indian Band, Oonkanane Friendship Centre, the South Okanagan Metis Association and OneSky Community Resources for the events of Sisters in Spirit Day on October 4, 2024. Facilitating this group in a meaningful and intentional way has strengthened

the collaborative efforts between the City of Penticton and Indigenous leaders and organizations in our community.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Age-Friendliness: The Social Development Department has continued to collaborate with diverse groups of senior-serving organizations through the Aging Well group for the well-being of seniors in our community. In Q3, the Social Development Department supported a grant application to the New Horizons for Seniors Program through Employment and Social Development Canada for the Aging Well group to support the vision of a community seniors' hub. Aging Well was able to secure funds through the Community Foundation in order to continue this work as well.

Accessibility: Social Development has continued to lead the implementation of the City's Accessibility Plan for 2023-2026, as well as supporting the City's Accessibility Committee. The Accessibility Committee was presented the Lakawanna Park Engagement with the Parks department and was able to help identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility by reviewing the project and engaging with the project consultants. Social Development, Information Technology and Infrastructure staff began working together to make the City of Penticton Road Closures webpage accessible to community members who are visually impaired and cannot see the map. More updates to come about this project in 2025 Q1. Social Development staff have continued to engage with the Municipal Accessibility Network, ensuring that municipal efforts to improve accessibility are aligned with other local governments to ensure a synchronized provincial approach.

Anti-Racism: Social Development Department staff have continued to support SOICS anti-racism community initiatives. SOICS is an organization which frequently engages in meaningful actions to reduce racism in the community, including hosting anti-racism forums, educational community sessions and engaging in anti-racist campaigns with the Provincial government. Staff have continued to participate in the Respect Network and the Local Immigration Partnership. Staff have also continued to explore an Anti-Harassment Bylaw which was brought forward by Council after a presentation about racism in the Okanagan by SOICS. More details to come in 2025 Q1.

Conclusion

The City of Penticton has taken a bold, proactive approach to adaptive community safety, using its Bylaw Services to respond to complex social challenges. This effort has allowed the city to address immediate and evolving needs, showcasing a commitment to resident well-being. However, as the complexities of homelessness, mental health, and substance use intensify, it's clear that municipal enforcement—no matter how resourceful—can only partially address these challenges.

The data speaks volumes, the increasing calls from residents citing safety concerns, calls for erratic or concerning behaviour, and daily mental health and welfare checks recorded—all drawn from just 25% of the available social call data—highlight the increasing demands on a system that, despite its dedication and creativity, operates with a limited effectiveness without broader provincial and federal investments in the community.

While adaptable, the Bylaw Service's role remains primarily reactive, focusing on immediate concerns without the preventive resources to address root causes. This underlines the need for continued investment in social

development strategies, including a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan that enables the city to go beyond short-term solutions and foster public safety more sustainably.

Growing demands on Penticton’s resources reveal critical gaps in British Columbia’s social infrastructure, where insufficient upstream support places an outsized burden on municipalities, compelling them to assume responsibilities traditionally handled by higher levels of government. Ultimately, achieving long-term community safety in Penticton requires a collective commitment to addressing root causes, transforming safety into a shared responsibility across all levels of government. Such a transformation would lessen the reactive burden on municipal programs like bylaw enforcement, strengthening Penticton’s vision of a modernized, resilient, inclusive and safe community for all.

Respectfully submitted,

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Concurrence

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