



Council Report

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Date: February 17, 2026
To: Anthony Haddad, City Manager
From: Cheryl Hardisty, Intergovernmental Relations Manager
Subject: **Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table**

Staff Recommendation

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated February 17, 2026, titled "Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table";

AND THAT Council appoint the Mayor as the City of Penticton's representative to the Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table.

Strategic priority objective

Vision: Penticton is a connected, resilient and healthy waterfront city focused on safety, livability and vibrancy.

Mission: Penticton will serve its residents, businesses and visitors through organizational excellence, partnership and the provision of effective and community focused services.

Culture: We are committed to open communication, integrity, and professionalism to build public trust through excellence in all that we do. We embrace modernization, innovation and adaptability to meet the evolving needs of our community, fostering a culture of engagement and purpose.

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

Livable & Accessible: The City of Penticton will proactively plan for deliberate growth, focusing on creating an inclusive, healthy, and vibrant community.

Background

In November 2024, the City of Penticton, along with Syilx Okanagan Governments and local governments throughout the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds, entered into an Intergovernmental Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to establish the Okanagan Similkameen

Collaborative Leadership Table. The MOA formalizes a government-to-government leadership table for elected officials to discuss matters of common concern related to the protection and restoration of water within the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds, including Okanagan Lake and the Similkameen River.

The MOA is a political agreement rather than a legal instrument. It does not create regulatory authority, impose financial obligations, or limit the decision-making authority of participating governments. Instead, it establishes a shared framework for dialogue, collaboration, and information sharing among governments that hold different jurisdictions and responsibilities within the watershed.

The agreement sets out the purpose of the Leadership Table, identifies guiding principles for how the parties will work together, and describes the governance and operating structure of the table. Participation at the table is limited to elected leaders, primarily Chiefs and Mayors, with decisions guided by consensus-based discussion while respecting the autonomy of each participating government.

With the Leadership Table now formally established and meetings underway, this report provides an update on the agreement, the scope of issues identified for discussion, and the City of Penticton's participation in the table.

Financial implication

There are no direct financial implications associated with participation in the Collaborative Leadership Table. Costs related to meeting attendance are accommodated within existing operating budgets. Any future initiatives arising from the table that may have financial implications would be brought forward to Council for consideration through the appropriate budgeting and approval processes.

Climate Impact

Climate change is affecting water systems across the Okanagan, including drought, wildfire, flooding, and water quality issues, which occur at a watershed scale. The Collaborative Leadership Table provides a forum for discussion of shared water-related issues, including those influenced by climate change. Participation is consistent with the information-sharing and coordination objectives identified in the City's Community Climate Action Plan. Participation is also generally consistent with the City's Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan, as it relates to awareness of climate-related risks to municipal services and infrastructure.

Analysis

The Memorandum of Agreement identifies a set of matters of common concern intended to guide discussions at the Leadership Table. These matters provide an initial focus for dialogue and reflect water-related issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and are shared across the watershed. They include:

- governance and decision-making related to watershed issues;

- protection of headwaters, priority species such as salmon, and riparian areas;
 - restoration of rivers, creeks, lakes, wetlands, aquifers, and other ecosystems;
 - maintenance and enhancement of existing water stewardship efforts;
 - water quality and quantity considerations, including base flows and flow regimes;
 - data and information priorities informed by both Indigenous knowledge and western science; and
 - addressing systemic issues, climate change, and cumulative impacts.
- Additional matters of common concern may be addressed subject to agreement of the Table. An important role of the Table will be to provide direction and input into a Okanagan and Similkameen Watershed Responsibility Plan.

The agreement also outlines how the Leadership Table will operate and allows for the creation of task forces on specific issues if and when the parties determine additional focus is required. The table is composed of elected leaders and is co-chaired by representatives from Syilx Okanagan Governments and local governments.

Early work of the Leadership Table has focused on relationship-building and information sharing to support a shared understanding of these areas of common concern. Discussions to date have centred on how different governments experience water-related challenges within their jurisdictions and where coordination or information sharing may be beneficial. This phase of work is not intended to result in immediate projects or decisions, but rather to establish a common context that may guide future collaboration.

One of the longer-term initiatives being discussed through the Leadership Table is the development of a 250-year responsibility plan for water, intended to provide a long-range, watershed-scale perspective on water stewardship in the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds. This work is at an early stage and is exploratory in nature.

The City of Penticton is advancing its own water-related planning and infrastructure work, including long-term water supply planning, asset management, and climate-related resilience considerations. While this work remains guided by local authority and priorities, there may be opportunities over time to better understand how City planning efforts align with, inform, or are informed by broader watershed-scale discussions. At this stage, no specific integration or commitments have been identified, and any future alignment would be subject to Council direction.

In addition to regular meetings of the Leadership Table, the Okanagan Nation Alliance is hosting the siwłk^w Water and Climate Forum in March 2026. The forum is intended to bring together elected leaders, technical staff, knowledge holders, and other participants to share information and discuss water-related issues affecting the Okanagan and Similkameen watersheds. The forum is being held in collaboration with the Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table and provides an opportunity for broader information sharing related to matters of common concern identified in the MOA.

For the City of Penticton, participation in the Leadership Table provides a forum to share local experience related to water planning and infrastructure, while gaining broader awareness of watershed-scale issues that may affect the City over the long term.

Attachments

Attachment A – Okanagan Similkameen Collaborative Leadership Table Memorandum of Agreement

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Hardisty
Intergovernmental Relations Manager

Concurrence

General Manager, Corporate Services <i>AMC</i>	General Manager, Infrastructure <i>ZD</i>	City Manager <i>SH</i>
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