

CITY news

Official opening of 116 child care spaces, 80 more on the way



Parents looking for child care now have more options available to them with the official opening of the Edmonton Avenue Child Care Centre.

The facility, operated by OneSky Community Resources, provides 116 spaces and marks a major step towards the City of Penticton's goal of creating 722 spaces by 2030. The Province funded 77 of the spaces by providing \$1.95 million in capital spending and the remaining spaces came from a \$1 million contribution from the Union of BC Municipalities.

"The Penticton Child Care Action plan set out clear targets to ensure child care needs are being met in our community and today's announcements are another step towards meeting our goals," says Mayor Julius Bloomfield. "A key part of the plan includes partnerships that help create needed spaces and we're seeing that in action."

As the ribbon was being cut on this new facility, Mayor Bloomfield also announced a new partnership with the YMCA of the Southern Interior to provide 80 new spaces at the Community Centre. This initiative aligns with Council's priority of a Vibrant & Connected community.

Car 40 Program coming to Penticton

After nearly two years of lobbying by Council, the Car 40 program that pairs an RCMP officer with a health care professional will be arriving in Penticton.

"This service will allow people in mental health crisis to be treated with a greater level of care and concern and connect them with the assistance they need," says Mayor Bloomfield.



Minister of Health and Mental Addictions Jennifer Whiteside stands with Mayor Julius Bloomfield and agency partners after announcing the Car 40 program for Penticton.

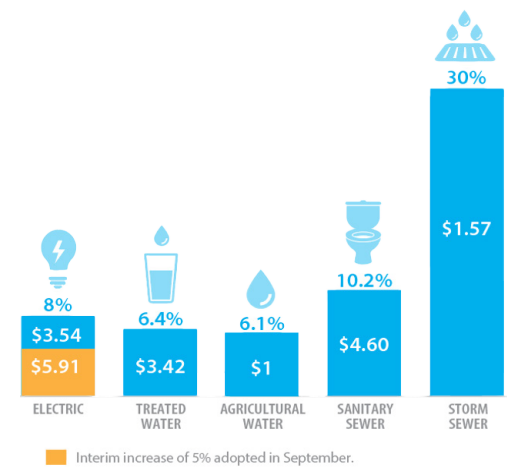
The RCMP and Interior Health are finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding for the Car 40 program. RCMP Staff Sgt. Bob Vatamaniuck says the MOU will see three psychiatric nurses respond with RCMP officers to mental health calls. The program will be offered seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The program, expected later this fall, is a key part of realizing Council's priority of a Safe and Resilient community.

For more information, visit penticton.ca/focus-on-safety

2024 Utility Rates

The City completed a review of utility rates this summer to calculate the funding needed to operate and maintain over \$800 million in assets today and into the future. The review recommends rates for the next few years and updates to City policies for reserves. The following chart summarizes the average rate increase for all utilities in 2024.



Utility Rate Q&A

Residents had the opportunity to discuss the findings from the review with staff as part of the community engagement program that concluded Sept. 15. Here are answers to a few of the most common questions the City received.

Why did the City borrow from the Electric Surplus Reserve?

The City borrowed \$7.4 million to help fund a section of the Lake-to-Lake Bike Route, a new two-bay garage at Fire Hall #2 and the Point Intersection. The decision saved the City \$3 million in interest charges and will be repaid before the funds are needed.

Are electric rates increasing to repay the loan?

No. The funds will be repaid over 10 years through gaming revenues from the casino. The Point Intersection portion is being repaid through Asset Sustainability Reserves. Utility rates are increasing to fully fund current annual operations and maintenance costs and future infrastructure needs.

See more answers to other popular questions and the results of the review at shapeyourcitypenticton.ca/2023-utility-review

Map plots thousands of new homes proposed or planned

Penticton is growing, with thousands of new properties proposed, approved or currently under construction. Housing supply continues to be a major issue facing our community and it's important to understand the work is underway to increase the existing housing stock.

Current developments underway include everything from rental housing and condo units to single-family homes. The estimated additions include:

- 460 residential units under construction
- 1,402 residential units approved
- 2,070 units in the development application process

To view the map charting out each of these projects, visit penticton.ca/growing



See the full map and learn more about the colour-coded developments that are proposed, approved or under construction by visiting penticton.ca/growing

More housing needed

Despite the number of projects in the works, Penticton has a long way to go to meet the need for housing in the community. The City recently completed a new Housing Needs Assessment in 2023 and it showed that between 2016 and 2021, Penticton's annual growth rate was high at 1.9%. If this trend continues, the City may have around 20,000 additional residents and 9,200 additional households by 2046.

To meet this demand, Penticton will need to add a significant number of units across the city over the next several years. Combined with the Province's proposal to allow up to four units on all single-family lots, there is the potential to see change in all Penticton neighbourhoods.

Council created a Task Force on Housing to review the housing policies in the Official Community Plan and make recommendations to meet the demand for housing in Penticton.

The City is wrapping up a series of events across Penticton to share this information and what it may mean for Penticton neighbourhoods. Visit penticton.ca/focus-on-housing for more information on how Penticton is tackling the need for housing.

Council Open House on October 26

Mark your calendars! Council will host its second Open House on Oct. 26 at the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre. Drop in between 4 pm and 7 pm to speak with Council about topics that matter to you and hear about progress on their priorities: Safe and Resilient, Livable and Accessible, Vibrant and Connected, and Organizational Excellence. Staff will also be available to discuss a range of topics including the 2024 Budget.

Focus on Safety showing results

The latest quarterly report from the RCMP, covering April to June, shows crime was down six per cent from the same quarter last year.

Presented by Staff Sgt. Bob Vatamaniuck, the report indicated significant declines in property crime, with Break and Enters (B&Es) for businesses down 56 per cent, B&Es for residential down 35 per cent.

He attributed the improved numbers to the work of the detachment's prolific offender management unit, who have been consistently visiting known offenders and ensuring they are abiding by their conditions. As well, he noted the addition of more officers over the last several years has allowed for faster response times.

"The trend is shifting because of the actions that we've taken as a council and working with RCMP and all the other service providers," said Mayor Julius Bloomfield. "Yes, we've still got a lot of work to do. But we're on the right trajectory and this is showing a really good trend."



Collaboration between the Community Safety Officers and the RCMP is leading to arrests. CSOs spotted suspicious activity on Sept. 9 and managed to recover a stolen hockey bag filled with sporting goods valued at over \$1,000. A patrol on Sept. 25 revealed several bags of clothing with price tags and anti-theft devices from Winners. In both cases, RCMP were involved and made arrests and the property was returned to its rightful owners.

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