

SAANICH POLICE BOARD



Memorandum

DATE: November 5, 2024

TO: Saanich Council

FROM: Saanich Police Board

SUBJECT: **2025 Saanich Police Provisional Budget**

Please accept this memo as the Saanich Police Board's 2025 provisional budget including the operating budget and equipment replacement projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saanich Police Department (SPD) 2025 operating budget requires an increase of 11.14%, or \$5,247,472 over 2024 to meet funding needs arising from anticipated wage increases and increases to committed operating expenses. Similar to 2024, significant external pressures and downloading of costs to the Department will continue in 2025. Further, additional resource requests critical to maintaining legislated provincial policing standards and service levels are required. Both these demands will have a significant financial impact on the Department. The Senior Leadership Team continues to undertake service delivery reviews to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness; however, it has been determined that no further service delivery efficiencies can be realized with existing resources. The resulting budget increase is one that the Board deems necessary for SPD to effectively respond to current and emerging internal and external challenges.

2025 PROVISIONAL BUDGET DETAILS

Table 1 (p.2) sets out the cost of the resources required to meet identified needs for the Saanich Police Department in 2025. Table 1 is followed by the general budget report including: Introduction, Fundamental Cost Drivers, Resource Requests, One-Time Funding Requests, Capital / Transfers from Reserves (Table 2), Council's Requests, Concluding Remarks and Comparisons, Recommendations.

Table 1: 2025 Provisional Budget

Net Operating Increase				
1. 2025 Net Operating Budget				52,361,146
Less: 2024 Net Operating Budget				-47,113,674
				5,247,472
Details of Increases		2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Increase
2. Salaries increase for Police				
	Contingency & Increments	40,440,506	43,862,673	3,422,167
3. Operating Increases		2,889,408	3,177,833	288,425
4. Integrated Unit Increases		1,164,420	1,964,420	800,000
5. E-Comm Levy Increases		2,619,340	3,195,595	576,255
6. 2 x Mental Health Co-Response Constables			160,625	160,625
Net Increase		47,113,674	52,361,146	5,247,472

Line 1 sets out the provisional 2025 net operating budget. This section also shows the 2024 actual budget and the net increase for 2025.

Line 2 reflects \$3,422,167 required funding increases for wages, benefits, and contingency.

Line 3 reflects \$288,425 in increases to existing operating costs, including standing service agreements and contracts.

Line 4 reflects a \$800,000 increase to regional policing costs. Specifically, these relate to the increased salaries and wages due to anticipated collective agreement settlements.

Line 5 reflects a \$576,255 increase to the E-Comm levy.

Line 6 represent costs for 2025 resource requests related to two Mental Health Co-Response Constables.

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 provisional budget represents the funding required to provide police services for the Municipality of Saanich. The Board is mindful of Council’s and the Municipality’s financial pressures and need to minimize the tax increase for the citizens of Saanich. With this in mind, the 2025 budget is limited to increases for negotiated Police Association and CUPE labour settlements, non-discretionary increases to operating expenses, increases to budgets for integrated police units, and critical resources to effectively respond to the mental health crisis that our frontline officers manage on a daily basis – two constables will form a co-response mental health response unit. These increases are deemed critical to effectively manage current and emerging administrative, operational, and public safety demands.

The Saanich Police Department provides high quality professional police services to the Municipality and the surrounding region. Although the investment required to maintain an adequate level of police

services is increasing, Saanich Police continues to cost less than other comparable police departments, while still enjoying significant community support.

- The most recent provincial figures (2021) report Saanich Police costing \$293 per capita compared to the municipal police average of \$448, and compared to the cost of urban police departments ranging from \$515 - \$570 per capita.
- Through the stakeholder consultation process leading up to the development of the 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan, survey and focus group results showed the Saanich Police provide effective and efficient services with a high level of trust and confidence.
- 85% of respondents had a great deal of confidence in the SPD's ability to ensure Saanich is safe.
- 93% of respondents indicated that they were treated with respect during interactions with officers of the past 2 years.
- 90% of respondents reported that the officer was professional in carrying out their duties.
- 88% of respondents felt listened to by officers.

The 2023-2026 Saanich Police Strategic Plan outlines key strategic objectives of community safety and well-being by providing service excellence through community connections, using strategic foresight and innovation, while ensuring organizational resilience and growth of the Department to serve our community.

Recent media reports indicate that many residents in British Columbia are increasingly concerned about their safety compared to previous years. A survey by Save Our Streets (SOS) revealed that 55% of respondents believe criminal activity has risen over the past four years, with 74% stating this impacts their quality of life

The primary concerns cited include addiction, mental health issues, and the effectiveness of the justice system. A significant 88% of participants attribute the current safety situation to addiction and mental health problems

Overall, the sentiment among residents reflects a desire for more stringent measures and effective solutions to address these issues.

The Saanich Police Department can enhance its effectiveness in providing public safety through several key strategies:

1. **Community Engagement:** Strengthening relationships with the community through programs like Block Watch, Speed Watch, and the Community Safety Office can help build trust and encourage community involvement in safety initiatives.
2. **Enhanced Training:** Providing ongoing training for officers in areas such as mental health crisis intervention, cultural competency, and de-escalation techniques can improve their ability to handle diverse situations effectively.
3. **Technology and Innovation:** Investing in modern technology, such as body-worn cameras, advanced data analytics, and improved communication systems, can enhance transparency and operational efficiency.

4. **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with other local agencies, non-profits, and mental health services can provide a more holistic approach to public safety, addressing underlying issues like addiction and mental health.
5. **Proactive Policing:** Focusing on proactive measures, such as increased patrols in high-crime areas and targeted road safety initiatives, can help prevent crime and improve overall safety.
6. **Feedback and Adaptability:** Continuously seeking feedback from the community and adapting strategies based on this input ensures that the SPD remains responsive to the needs and concerns of residents.

By implementing these strategies, the Saanich Police Department can continue to improve its service and effectively respond to the increasing changes and demands experienced in community and region.

Throughout 2024, the Senior Leadership Team continued to research and, where possible, implement new business practices and initiatives to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness, modernize police services, reduce operating costs, and improve staffing and deployment. Examples of this include the following:

- Expand capacity and assignments to the Community Safety Officer unit to redeploy police officers to frontline duties
- Developed a new deployment model for the Tactical Support Team, consisting of Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team officers, to supplement and support frontline patrol when not involved in a critical incident activation or training.
- Created a new supervisor position in the Patrol Division through an organizational change (existing resource) to enhance supervisory capacity and respond to the increased demands associated with risk assessments, operational planning, and organized public order matters (protests).

FUNDAMENTAL COST DRIVERS

The 2025 provisional budget includes the following specific cost drivers:

- Increases associated to settled and anticipated wage settlements, increments and benefits require an increase of 7.26% (\$3,422,167):
 - The Police Association collective agreement expires in December 2024; and
 - The CUPE collective agreement expires in December 2024.
- Increases to operating expenses including service contracts, building and fleet maintenance, result in a 0.61% (\$288,425) increase;
- Increases to operating budgets of integrated units result in a 1.70% (\$800,000) increase;
- Increases to the E-Comm Levy result in a 1.22% (\$576,255) increase; and,
- New resource requests result in an increase of 0.34% (\$160,625).

Non-discretionary increases include wage contingencies, fixed building maintenance, service contracts, CREST/PRIME/E-Comm levies, fleet operating, and transfers to reserve accounts including Fleet, IT and the Police Equipment Replacement Fund (PERF).

As illustrated in Table 1, the largest increase in the 2025 budget results from anticipated wage increases through the collective bargaining process. The 2024 approved budget included ten additional resources. Of these approved requests, six of them are sworn positions, while the remaining four are civilian positions. Funding approved in the 2024 budget for these positions included six months' of salary and benefits commencing July 2024; therefore an additional six months' of salary and benefits are required in the 2025 budget and are embedded in line 1.

Integrated Units represent the second largest increase in the 2025 budget. Increases are largely due collective agreement increases, mostly due to the newly negotiated (on-call) standby pay in 2023. It should be noted that SPD members who were entitled to this new standby pay provision received this benefit through the 2024 budget, so a reduction in benefits were considered for 2025 to reclassify this expenditure through the Integrated Units budget.

The E-Comm levy represents the third largest increase in the 2025 budget. E-Comm introduced a transformation plan in 2023, and significant financial investment continues to be required to ensure that adequate staffing levels will meet current demands and prepare for future demands relating to Next Gen 9-1-1. The BC Association of Chiefs of Police are in regular contact with E-Comm Board of Directors and CEO to ensure all budget decisions are accountable and defensible. The increase of \$576,255 for the E-Comm levy totals 1.22% of the overall 11.14% increase over 2024.

RESOURCE REQUESTS

Line 6 sets out the cost of additional positions required in 2025. The cost noted reflect six-months of wages and benefits. This practice, consistent with the District, provides the exact funding required, based on the expected date of hire for each position, instead of a full year of salary and benefits. This approach results in the remaining annualized cost, plus any increase to salary, being required in 2026 to annualize the full cost.

Line 6 - Two Mental Health Co-Response Constables

Municipalities across British Columbia are working diligently to address the adverse impacts of trauma, poverty, homelessness, and addiction on the mental health and wellbeing of community members. Provincial government programs have attempted to address the complexity of these interdependent health and public safety issues with varying degrees of success. However, where gaps exist in service delivery and required resources, struggling community members can find themselves in crisis requiring emergency intervention by health services and policing partners to mitigate individual and collective risks.

The Saanich Police Department has been an active participant in the Island Health Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team (IMCRT) since its inception in 2006. This regional unit is staffed by VIHA mental health professionals with the support of a police officer position funded by the Greater Victoria Area Chiefs. While this program has realized some significant successes, the increasing frequency and severity of mental health and addiction issues across the region is quickly outpacing the ability of these professionals

to respond effectively and efficiently to calls for service. In response, some regional police agencies including the Victoria Police Department (VicPD) and West Shore RCMP (WS RCMP) have implemented new Co-Response Teams (CRTs) to reinforce the crisis response framework in their own jurisdiction.

CRTs pair a police officer with an Island Health mental health clinician. These two-person teams attend a variety of calls for service where a person's mental health is likely a significant contributing factor to the issues being reported. Early reports from the VicPD and WS RCMP suggest that these teams provide an effective, efficient, and proportional response to assist persons experiencing mental health challenges in a trauma-informed way. CRTs have the ability to enhance public trust and confidence in the police through a demonstration of effective partnerships and a shared commitment to address mental health issues as a medical concern that has the potential to impact individual and public safety.

In October 2024, the WS RCMP and Central Saanich Police Service (CSPS) provided notice to the Area Chiefs of their intention to withdraw from IMCRT due to other budget considerations and resource demands. The effectiveness of CRTs in meeting WS RCMP's public safety service delivery needs was a factor in their decision to shift funding and resources away from IMCRT. The Saanich Police Department needs to strategically position itself with additional resources to effectively respond to mental health calls for service if additional funding and resource limitations are placed on IMCRT in the future.

The SPD is requesting funding for two new police constable positions to be dedicated to development and implementation of two CRTs for the District of Saanich in partnership with Island Health. The creation and implementation of CRTs as part of SPD's public safety service delivery framework would reinforce our key strategic commitment of "Service Excellence" in pursuit of our Vision, to provide, "...the highest quality police service that inspires pride, respect, and trust".

The cost in line 6 of \$160,625 reflects six months salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2025.

ONE-TIME FUNDING REQUESTS

One-time funding requirements do not impact the net operating budget. Council decides whether to fund these items depending on priority and availability of sufficient funds. There are no one-time funding requests for 2025.

CAPITAL / TRANSFERS FROM RESERVES

Table 2 sets out capital expenditures and identifies sources of funding; either core capital or transfers from reserves.

Table 2: 2025 Capital / Reserve Fund Expenditures and Funding Sources

2025 Capital	Source of Funds				Budget 2025
	Core	Public Safety and Security Reserve Fund			
		IT Replacement	Fleet Replacement	PERF	
Annual Vehicle Replacement	304,631		207,000		511,631
Computer Hardware and Software	50,250	252,873		128,500	431,623
Office Equipment	104,500				104,500
Investigative Equipment	54,616				54,616
Officer and Public Safety Equipment	25,000			120,000	145,000
Infrastructure Improvements	38,000				38,000
Total Capital Expenditures	576,997	252,873	207,000	248,500	1,285,370
2024 Reserve Funds		455,121	917,534	677,562	2,050,217
2024 Year-end Reserve Balance		202,248	710,534	429,062	1,341,844

a. Core Capital

Contained within the police budget is a core capital account used to fund capital expenditures, generally valued in excess of \$10,000, that are necessary for new equipment, or the replacement of existing capital items. Expenditures for 2024 include the initial funding for the annual fleet replacement, new computer hardware and software, equipment for offices, investigations, and officer safety, and minor infrastructure improvements. Total capital expenditures amount to \$576,997.

b. Reserve Fund Capital Projects

Reserve accounts are funded through transfers from the police operating budget and any funding received through the Traffic Fine Sharing Program in excess of \$1.5 million, which varies in any given year. The 2024 year-end balance of the Public Safety and Security Reserve Fund for capital initiatives is estimated at \$1,180,343. Contributions for 2025 are estimated to be \$869,874, leaving \$2,050,217 available for 2025 projects. The Police Board has recommended expenditures in the amount of \$708,373 to be funded through reserve accounts, leaving a balance of \$1,341,844. This balance will be required for ongoing fleet and IT replacement, which are subject to high and low demand years.

i. IT Replacement

In 2025, IT projects amount to \$431,623:

- There is currently a balance of \$77,378 in this account.
- \$377,743 will be transferred into the account in 2025.
- Available balance for 2025 expenditures is \$455,121.
- \$252,873 of the purchases is considered inventory replacement and therefore will be funded through the IT Replacement Reserve Account.
- The remaining \$50,250 required for IT projects that are considered new, or outside of replacement, will be funded through the Core Capital accounts.

ii. Fleet Replacement

In 2025, the Department is scheduled to replace 5 police vehicles. The funding to replace these vehicles comes through a combination of the Department's core capital budget and the Fleet Replacement Reserve Fund. The first \$304,631 will be funded from Core Capital, with the remaining \$207,000 being funded through the Fleet Replacement Reserve Fund.

iii. Police Equipment Replacement Fund

The Police Equipment Replacement Fund (PERF) is funded through transfers from the Police Department budget (\$269,070 with a 2% increase per annum). The Board is responsible for deciding on the appropriate use of PERF and making recommendations to Council for their approval.

For 2025, two projects have been identified to be funded through the Police Equipment Replacement Fund. The total commitment is \$248,500, which will leave approximately \$429,062 remaining in the fund at 2025 year-end.

1. \$120,000 is required for the replacement of police officer personal protective equipment for frontline operations, as the inventory for this specific equipment will reach the end of its useful service life in 2025.
2. \$128,500 is required for the replacement of building security related equipment that will reach the end of its useful service life in 2025.

COUNCIL'S REQUESTS

1. Forecasts & Multi-year Financial Planning

During the 2024 budget consultation process, Council has communicated its desire for the Board to provide them with a five-year financial plan.

The 2024 approved budget included one-time funding for an evidence-based study to examine and identify the appropriate level of resourcing required to address and respond to current and anticipated police standards, public safety demands, growth and densification in Saanich, staff wellness challenges and retention, and the downloading of services and costs from other provincial service providers. This study, currently being conducted by an experienced and professional third-party consultant will provide quantitative reasoning and justification for adding, reducing, or redirecting budgeted positions and resources within the organization, and will forecast anticipated staffing needs based on estimated growth projections within the District of Saanich. Results from this study will provide a basis for forecasting and multi-year financial planning, which will aim to inform the Police Board and Council of the Department's immediate and future needs. It is recommended that a multi-year financial plan be developed based on the findings of this study, which is expected to be presented to the Saanich Police Board in 2025.

2. Budget Reduction Strategies / Scenarios

The budget guideline for Saanich calls for reduction scenarios to be prepared in the amounts of 1.0% and 2.0%. Based on the proposed provisional budget, a 1.0% reduction will be approximately \$523,611, whereas a 2.0% reduction will be \$1,047,223.

Since approximately 90% of the provisional budget represents labour costs, a reduction of 1.0% in the budget would result in eliminating four (4) existing positions, and a 2.0% in the budget would result in eliminating seven (7) existing positions. These positions include both police and civilian positions, but any existing positions that are eliminated require layoffs of staff and have additional cost implications.

3. Impact of 5.0% Target

There is a 6.14% (\$2,892,780) difference between the anticipated provisional 2025 budget increase of 11.14% and Council’s preferred target of 5.0%. As noted in Table 1 wage and benefits account for an increase of 7.26% and non-discretionary operating increases account for another 3.53%. Given that the budget is largely non-discretionary, limiting the Police Board to a 5.0% increase would result laying off 17 existing police positions, and would result in unacceptable and indefensible service reductions.

This set of budget guidelines are being presented as a “hold the line” budget addressing only critical needs. While the Department, along with the Board support a budget that minimizes the impact to taxpayers, it cannot support further reductions. The increases to operating expenses are required to maintain operations, and the staff positions included in the budget are considered critical to address the safety needs and demands of the community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND COMPARISONS

The Saanich Police Department provides high quality professional police service, public safety, awareness, and education to the Municipality and the surrounding region, which continues to strengthen relationships, public trust, and confidence. Although the investment required to maintain a healthy, reliable, responsive, and high functioning police service is increasing, Saanich Police continues to cost less than other comparable police departments while still enjoying significant community support.

Appendix A contains an excerpt from The Police Resources in British Columbia 2022 report. The comparison highlights the Saanich Police cost of \$313 per capita and a population to officer ratio of 763:1, compared to the provincial average cost of \$455 per capita and a population to officer ratio of 582:1.

When compared to Abbotsford, Delta and Victoria, which are similar sized departments, Saanich has the **second highest** population per officer ratio and **the lowest** cost per capita of its municipal police comparators. The Chief Constable and Senior Leadership Team strongly recommend that steps be taken to align our resources more effectively with similar sized departments.

Municipality	Population Per Officer	Cost Per Capita
Abbotsford	776	\$355
Delta	587	\$393
Victoria	453	\$553
Saanich	763	\$313

The Saanich Police Board appreciates Council's ongoing investment in community and police officer safety and wellbeing. The primary goal of the 2025 provisional budget, is to maintain and modernize existing levels of service. As Saanich continues to rapidly grow as a vibrant community, it is vital to recognize that the organization has reached maximum efficiency. Critical resources are required for the organization to effectively address and respond to changing public safety demands within Saanich. The requested additional resources will significantly improve and enhance our readiness and ability to manage specific high-risk situations that are expected and demanded by the citizens of Saanich. The Executive Leadership Team is committed to taking a bold, creative, and innovative approach to address existing and emerging demands, while paying close attention to the health and wellness of all staff. These include:

- assessing positions and services to determine a balanced and proportionate number of civilian support staff to effectively fulfil key duties and responsibilities that do not require a sworn police officer;
- internal restructuring and modernization of services;
- integrating services with other regional police partners; and
- implementing strategies and initiatives to ensure efficient and effective business practices continue to relieve existing budget pressures and increased / changing demands for service.

RECOMMENDATION

That the approved 2025 Saanich Police Board Budget be endorsed as presented.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration and approval,

The Saanich Police Board

End of Report

Appendix A

2022 Municipal Police Departments Resources

MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS²

Municipality	Population	Auth. Strength¹³	Adjusted Strength⁵	Pop. Per Officer	CCC Offences	Crime Rate	Case Load	Total Costs^{7,13}	Cost Per Capita
<i>Abbotsford Mun^{6,9}</i>	168,608	210	217	776	7,927	47	36	\$59,901,204	\$355
Central Saanich Mun	18,689	23	23	813	479	26	21	\$5,086,018	\$272
<i>Delta Mun^{6,9,14}</i>	115,605	194	197	587	4,649	40	24	\$45,463,138	\$393
Nelson City Mun	11,467	20	20	573	976	85	49	\$4,659,264	\$406
<i>New Westminster Mun⁶</i>	85,708	114	117	734	5,187	61	44	\$30,536,741	\$356
Oak Bay Mun ¹⁵	19,211	21	21	915	500	26	24	\$6,043,544	\$315
<i>Port Moody Mun⁶</i>	36,792	52	54	686	966	26	18	\$13,204,559	\$359
Saanich Mun	125,853	165	165	763	4,622	37	28	\$39,352,521	\$313
<i>Vancouver Mun⁹</i>	707,667	1,348	1,348	525	44,911	63	33	\$373,932,968	\$528
Victoria Mun ¹⁶	115,545	255	255	453	11,550	100	45	\$63,911,556	\$553
<i>West Vancouver Mun^{6,9}</i>	48,792	79	82	597	2,518	52	31	\$19,178,587	\$393
Total	1,453,937	2,481	2,498	582	84,285	58	34	\$661,270,120	\$455