Police Services

The Police Services Sheet was developed for presentation to the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee at its meeting on April 16, 2024. The sheet was prepared using information available at the time of writing. Changes will be made if new information becomes available.

Information presented on the Okanagan Falls Incorporation scenario is based on the following assumption:

> *That an Okanagan Falls municipality would continue to be served by the RCMP through the Penticton detachment*

THE PRESENT

➤ What service is provided?

Under the *Police Act*, the provincial government must provide policing and law enforcement to all unincorporated areas, and to municipalities with fewer than 5,000 people. Service is delivered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) pursuant to the Province's Provincial Police Service Agreement (PSSA) with the federal government.

Under the terms of the agreement, the provincial government pays 70% of the base cost; the federal government pays the remaining 30%. The Province recovers a portion of its costs from local taxpayers through the Police Tax. This tax covers a portion of the cost required to fund the RCMP Provincial Service's "general duty" and "general investigative" services.

The RCMP Provincial Service can be broken into two main categories:

- **Detachment Policing** - This category delivers local police services to municipalities under 5,000 population and unincorporated areas by means of uniformed patrols, response-to-call duties, investigative services, community-based policing, traffic enforcement, and administrative support to provincial detachments.

- **Provincial Police Infrastructure (PPI)** - PPI provides services to the entire Province, including RCMP-policed municipalities and municipalities with their own police departments. The PPI has the capacity and expertise to resolve high risk incidents; target organized crime, gang violence, and serial crimes; respond to existing and emerging crime trends; and provide security and policing services for large scale, community events and emergencies. The PPI also includes capital-intensive items such as boats and aircraft.

Okanagan Falls is served by the Penticton RCMP detachment, which has eight provincially funded rural police officers to serve a population of 12,587 (2022 numbers).

Figure 1: Penticton RCMP Detachment Service Area



In addition to the provincially funded police officers, the RDOS funds a Crime Stoppers and Community Policing officer working out of the Penticton RCMP detachment. The RDOS also provides subsidies for Victim Services programs, as noted and accounted for in the Emergency Services Service Sheet.

➢ Who makes decisions?

The Officer in Charge (OIC) of Penticton South Okanagan Similkameen regional detachment meets with the RDOS Board of Directors on a quarterly basis, and provides information on areas of interest in the region. This information includes regional statistics and detachment priorities. The OIC provides oversight to the six RCMP detachments within the RDOS, including the Penticton Detachment.

The RDOS can lobby for a specific number of Provincial police officers; however, it is the Province that determines the appropriate number assigned to each detachment.

Decisions about priorities and day-to-day policing

RCMP provincial police services are governed by the *Police Act* and the PPSA. The Solicitor General is responsible for ensuring that adequate and effective policing services are maintained throughout BC. The Solicitor General also has the authority to set overarching priorities, goals and objectives for the Provincial Police Service; the Commanding Officer of the BC RCMP is required to implement them. Day-to-day decisions and operational matters are under the internal management and control of the RCMP.

While the Minister is responsible for setting police priorities, the RCMP is expected to consult with local leaders. Specifically, Detachment Commanders are expected to engage Indigenous and local governments within the detachment service area in establishing local policing priorities.

Decisions about resource levels

Decisions on resource levels and "authorized strength" for unincorporated areas, and for municipalities with fewer than 5,000 people, involve the RCMP and Province, but are driven by the RCMP's analyses of workloads and needs. The RCMP maintains internal processes for local detachments to request adjustments to authorized strength for unincorporated areas, and for municipalities with fewer than 5,000 people. These requests are forwarded to BC RCMP Headquarters to be evaluated and considered by the Province in the broader context of the entire Provincial Police Service. Options available to the RCMP include:

- determining that the provincial detachment is resourced adequately to meet its workload needs
- proposing a re-allocation of resources from within the Provincial Police Service to augment the unit
- proposing an increase in resources for the unit

Any changes to the organizational structure of the Provincial Police Service, including changes to provincial detachment units, requires agreement between the BC RCMP and the Solicitor General, as per the PPSA.

➢ Who delivers the service?

The RCMP provides policing personnel. Civilian staff (municipal and federal public employees, and volunteers) support police operations.

➢ What is spent on the service?

The rural Police Tax is set and collected by the Province. The total rural Police Tax collected from Okanagan Falls incorporation study area for 2023 was estimated at $92,533. In addition, RDOS funds victim services programs, which were outlined in the *Emergency Services Sheet*.

➢ How are the costs recovered?

The cost of police service for Okanagan Falls is paid

70% by the Province and 30% by the federal government. A portion of the provincial funding is recovered through the Police Tax from local property owners; a separate portion is recovered from the rural tax. The provincial policy was updated in 2023, with the Province setting police tax target to collect 33% of previous year's costs of front-line policing after deductions. Revenues go into the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund.

➢ What is the cost to a typical residence?

Figure 2 shows the cost of the police tax on a residence within Okanagan Falls valued at $500,000.

Figure 2: Cost Impact on a Typical Residence (2023)

SERVICE	RES RATE	OWING[1]
Police Tax	0.0889	$44.45
	Total	**$44.45**

[1] Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000. Amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee charged

INCORPORATION

➢ What impact would incorporation have on these services?

For a new Okanagan Falls municipality, little would change with the delivery of police services in the short term. The municipality's population (estimated at 2,760) would not exceed 5,000 in the foreseeable future; thus, the municipality would not be responsible for providing and paying for policing within its municipal boundaries. Services would continue to be provided from the Penticton Detachment; Okanagan Falls would not be expected to receive its own detachment building.

The RCMP would need to regularly update and consult with the Municipal Council, and discuss policing priorities with the Council, rather than just the RDOS. Sharing priorities would not necessarily change, however, how the service is provided, or the number of officers involved in delivering the service. The municipality would be able to advocate for service changes and could propose, for instance, added resources for the municipality (i.e. offer to fund additional officers); but ultimately the decision would not be the municipality's to make.

➢ How would decision-making change?

As noted, with respect to decision-making, the RCMP would be expected to consult the Mayor and Council of the new municipality on the development of the local Annual Performance Plans. The municipality's policing priorities would be reflected in these plans. While the municipality could advocate for changes, the municipality would not have the authority to make decisions regarding the service, including the number of officers allocated to policing in the community (i.e., authorized strength).

➢ How would incorporation impact service delivery?

There would be no changes in service delivery. The service would continue to be provided through the RCMP.

➢ How would service costs change?

Although the RCMP would continue to service the new municipality from the Penticton detachment, the amount of police tax recovered from the Okanagan Falls area would change slightly as a result of incorporation. Specifically, a higher municipal rate for the Police Tax would be applied in place of the rural rate. Unincorporated areas receive a $0.10 per $1,000 assessed value reduction in the Police Tax, known colloquially as the "rural dime" tax rate reduction. This reduction reflects the fact that unincorporated areas

also pay the provincial rural area tax, some of which could be considered a contribution to rural police services. The increase would not result in additional revenues to the Province; rather, the amounts collected from unincorporated area would decrease slightly. Property owners in OK Falls would therefore see a minimal increase in police tax (about $8,800 for the entire area based on the 2023 tax data). This amount would translate into an increase of approximately $4.24 on a residential property assessed at $500,000.

Future Considerations

More significant changes related to policing would occur when the municipality reached a population of 5,000. Once the Canada Census determined that the 5,000 mark had been met, the new municipality would become responsible for paying for police services. At that time, as per the *Police Act*, the municipality would have the option of providing its own police department, contracting with an adjacent municipality's existing municipal department, or entering into an MPUA with the Province to contract the RCMP as the municipal police service. If the municipality chose to enter into the MPUA to contract the RCMP, the federal government would pay 30% of the RCMP cost-base to the municipality's 70%. The impact of the 30% community share would depend on the authorized strength and many other factors. In all instances, however, exceeding the 5,000-person threshold would represents a significant increase to the contributions paid through the Province's police tax.

Once over the 5,000 person threshold, the municipality would be responsible for 100% of certain costs, such as the detachment building, holding cells, furniture and civilian support staff. Municipalities with more than 5,000 people that are policed by municipal police department, or that contract with the municipal department in an adjacent municipality, must pay 100% of all policing costs.

It is worth noting that BC Stats projects a growth rate of approximately 1.33% for the unincorporated areas of RDOS between 2020 and 2046. If that rate were applied to the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area, the area would not exceed a population of 5,000 until 2068. Typically municipalities monitor growth, and know when they will exceed the threshold, allowing them to prepare through the establishment of reserves to support the transition. Oliver passed this threshold in the 2021 Census for the first time and began paying for policing in 2022. Oliver had set aside money for the transition since 2018.

SUMMARY OF TAX IMPACTS

Figure 3 presents the tax impact of the two scenarios – the current situation (RDOS) and incorporation (MUNICIPAL).

Figure 3: Tax Comparison of Regional District and Incorporation Scenarios

SERVICE	RDOS[1]	MUNICIPAL[1]
Police Tax	$44.45	$48.69
Total	**$44.45**	**$48.69**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000.*