

STATEMENT

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Mayor calls for senior government help in face of vigilantism

Nanaimo is facing a public safety crisis resulting from the failed policies of senior government that is beyond the City's capacity to control or repair, says Nanaimo Mayor Leonard Krog.

On Sunday, March 12, an altercation in an encampment of unsheltered people resulted in serious injuries to two people attempting to retrieve goods allegedly stolen from them.

"On behalf of City Council and the community, I call upon the federal and provincial governments to recognize their responsibility to our residents and to step up and take meaningful action now. Our City is not able to fix the underlying issues that have led to the problems we are facing and the kind of situation that unfolded here on Sunday.

"When government is no longer able to protect people and their property, we are in a dangerous place.

"Despite our efforts to increase public safety and clean up the downtown - at significant cost to taxpayers - we continue to struggle with the effects of senior government policies that have failed to curb violence from known offenders or help the most vulnerable among us. As a result, some people feel they have no option but to take matters into their own hands," Krog said.

Since 2018, Nanaimo has taken a multi-pronged approach to public safety, homelessness and the housing crisis. Among those actions, the City created and is implementing a Health and Housing Action Plan, including the newly-launched Systems Planning Organization.

The City is leading a Situation Table where vulnerable people can be identified and helped, and approved the Downtown Safety Action Plan. The safety plan includes 12 Community Safety Officers to proactively identify and prevent conflict, and enhanced cleaning of parkades and other downtown areas. With CSOs in place, Bylaw officers and police can focus on enforcement throughout the City.

This year, taxpayers will see the full cost of CSOs and the two full-time, seven-day-a week Clean Teams in the City budget.

City Council also approved hiring an additional 20 firefighters this year and 20 in 2025, plus six civilian RCMP members this year and nine civilian and sworn members in the coming five years. The new police staff will relieve officers of administrative work and allow police more time to focus on protecting the public.

Nanaimo was part of the 13-member Union of BC Municipalities Urban Mayors' Caucus. At the urging of those 13 mayors, the Province is adding new funding for police under the Safer Communities Plan, and has committed to strengthening enforcement and enhancing service delivery.

Continued... Mayor calls for senior government help in face of vigilantism

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