SAANICH POLICE DEPARTMENT

DATE: November 14, 2025

PREPARED FOR: Saanich Council

FROM: Saanich Police Board

TOPIC: **2026 SAANICH POLICE PROVISIONAL BUDGET**

Please accept this memo as the Saanich Police Board's 2026 provisional budget including the operating budget and equipment replacement projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saanich Police Department (SPD) 2026 operating budget requires an increase of 6.67%, or $3,483,118 over 2025 to meet funding needs arising from anticipated wage increases and increases to committed operating expenses. Similar to 2025, significant external pressures and downloading of costs to the Department continues in 2026. Further, additional resource requests critical to maintaining existing policing standards and service levels are required. Both these demands will create a significant financial impact to the Department. The Senior Leadership Team continues to review and analyse resource allocations to ensure that the public safety services provided to the people of Saanich are effective, meet or exceed expectations, and fiscally responsible and accountable. That said, with slow and inconsistent organizational growth coupled with rapid community growth, increased complexities associated to public safety, and the downloading of provincial social service responsibilities, the Saanich Police Department is currently operating at overcapacity. In today's world of modern policing and public safety, doing more with less is unsustainable and high risk. This budget focuses on three key pillars to enhance sustainable, reliable, responsive, and cost-effective policing in Saanich. The recommendations presented are data-driven and reflect current and anticipated critical needs that are required to,

- maintain high levels of public trust and confidence in policing and public safety in Saanich;
- retain our highly trained workforce and attract new staff to ensure stability, organizational health, and return on investment – while mitigating high costs of turnover; and,
- enhance internal analytics and business practices to expand and streamline the organization's capability to identify and implement data-driven, evidence-based initiatives that effectively respond to public safety changes and needs in Saanich.

Saanich is considered one of the safest communities to live, raise families, learn, and work in our country. This level – and feeling – of safety has been protected, overseen, and maintained by the Saanich Police Department for 120 years, while the cost of policing has remained at one of the lowest levels in the province of British Columbia. In the modern age of technology, crime and social disorder/systems have significantly increased in complexity, requiring police departments to modernize, adapt, grow, and respond to new and emerging threats. Failure to do so is not an option.

The people of Saanich expect sustainable, reliable, responsive, and cost-effective policing. The Saanich Police Department continuously earns high levels of trust and confidence, year after year, from those we serve. To ensure that public safety is maintained at expected levels, it is vital that our services respond to the changes and demands of a growing community, region, province, country, and world. The Saanich Police Board is responsible and accountable for approving and submitting a 2026 police budget that address the essential needs of the Department. Further, the governance and financial oversight roles of the Board are critical to ensure that the Department is capable of fulfilling the requirements of the *BC Police Act.* The 2026 Saanich Police budget contains what is necessary for the Department to adapt and respond to changing internal and external pressures – to keep Saanich safe. The provisional budget reflects a low-moderate increase when compared to most police departments in British Columbia and Canada, which further demonstrates our attention to addressing the true cost of policing in a fiscally responsible and accountable way. The Saanich Police Board recommends that Saanich Council approve the 2026 provisional budget, as outlined.

2026 PROVISIONAL BUDGET DETAILS

Table 1 (p.3) sets out the cost of the resources required to meet identified needs for the Saanich Police Department in 2026. Table 1 is followed by the general budget report including: Introduction, 2025 Efficiencies Realized, Fundamental Cost Drivers, Resource Requests, One-Time Funding Requests, Capital / Transfers from Reserves (Table 2), Council's Requests, Concluding Remarks, Comparisons, and Recommendations.

Table 1: 2026 Provisional Budget

Net Operating Increase				
1. 2026 Net Operating Budget			55,682,966	
Less: 2025 Net Operating Budget			-52,199,848	
				3,483,118
Details of Increases		**2025 Budget**	**2026 Budget**	**Increase**
2. Salaries Increase for Police				
	Contingency & Increments	43,862,000	45,606,357	1,744,357
3. Operating Increases		3,177,833	4,232,313	1,054,480
4. Integrated Unit Increases		1,964,420	1,964,420	0
5. E-Comm Levy Increases		3,195,595	3,195,595	0
6. Community Safety Officer Program Expansion			174,432	174,432
7. Administrative Assistant - Staff Development Division			53,853	53,853
8. Research Analyst			70,509	70,509
9. Financial Analyst			58,303	58,303
10. Mental Health First Response Constables X 2			163,592	163,592
11. Patrol Constables X 2			163,592	163,592
Net Increase		**52,199,848**	**55,682,966**	**3,483,118**

Line 1 sets out the provisional 2026 net operating budget. This section also shows the 2025 actual budget and the net increase for 2026.

Line 2 reflects $1,744,357 required funding increases for wages, benefits, and contingency.

Line 3 reflects $1,054,480 in increases to existing operating costs, including standing service agreements and contracts.

Line 4 reflects the $0 increase to regional policing costs.

Line 5 reflects the $0 increase to the E-Comm levy.

Lines 6 to 11 represent costs for 2026 resource requests.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the escalating costs associated with modern policing, driven by external pressures have placed unprecedented financial demands on police departments. These mounting expenses, coupled with the critical need for additional resources to sustain current service standards, underscore a fundamental truth; sufficient funding is not just a budgetary concern, but a public safety imperative. Without appropriate investment, our community risks diminished safety, increased strain on officers and staff, and challenges in retaining the skilled professionals essential to effective policing, public safety, and community wellbeing. To safeguard both the wellbeing of our officers and the peace and safety of the public we serve, it is vital that our police budget reflects the true cost of delivering the high standards our community expects and deserves.

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, the Saanich Police Department continues to cost less than other comparable police departments, while still enjoying high community trust, confidence, and support.

- The most recent provincial figures (2023) report Saanich Police costing $350 per capita compared to the municipal police average of $490, and compared to the cost of urban police departments ranging from $555 - $598 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 objective 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.

Throughout 2025, 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.

For 2026, the Saanich Police Board is in a position to present a provisional budget increase of 6.67%, which is lower than the 7.25% originally planned for in the 2026 Saanich Budget Guidelines. This was made possible in large part due to the minimal increase in the E-Comm levy; the amount budgeted for E-Comm in 2025 exceeded the actual charge, and the anticipated increase for 2026 is negligible. As a result, the department was able to restrain overall budget growth, ensuring that critical operational and staffing needs are met with a budget that is 0.58% less than anticipated.

2025 EFFICENCIES REALIZED

Re-Allocation of Existing Resources and Internal Restructuring

Throughout 2025, the Saanich Police senior leadership team continuously reviewed and evaluated service delivery practices to ensure that existing resources were effectively assigned and deployed to respond to our key strategic priorities. The following highlights key changes implemented:

Patrol Division

- Creation of the Operational Support Sergeant to enhance supervision, support, and operational oversight of the frontline.
- Creation of the Administrative Support Sergeant to improve and realign business processes, including but not limited to:
    - domestic violence and missing person report oversight and reviews, management of seized property documentation.
    - Monitor all division investigations that have a requirement under section 490 of the Criminal Code (detention, return, or forfeiture of seized property).
    - Provide operational relief and support to on duty supervisors (mitigate overtime).

Staff Development Division

- A tactical support officer was reassigned from Patrol to the Training Section to enhance our capacity for facilitating training and program development, while also reducing the collateral duties that have historically impacted our ability to deliver consistent and high-quality instruction.

- Reallocated a sergeant to improve and execute the recruiting strategy and assist the training section with supervision, training, and mentoring. This position ensures continuity and supervisor coverage in recruiting, while also assisting with the delivery of mandatory and specialized training.

Administration Division

- Replacing the Front Desk Constable with a Community Safety Officer (CSO). Transitioning this role provides CSOs enhanced training, including instruction on fingerprinting, expanded knowledge to respond to public enquiries, and additional skills to support operations in cells.

- Re-structuring reporting lines. SPD's PRIME Coordinator and Digital Evidence Technicians transitioned from the Records/Detective sections to the IT Section. This transition boosts efficiency by streamlining processes and minimizing task duplication. As these positions increasingly depend on technical expertise and digital infrastructure, their integration with IT supports faster issue resolution and ensures that digital evidence and record management are overseen by specialists. This approach facilitates prompt troubleshooting, more effective use of resources, and improved communication, resulting in a more unified workflow.

- Shifting the third Record Support Clerk's schedule to peak hours—Monday to Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. This maximizes coverage during busy periods. This adjustment from a 12-hour shift pattern ensures support is available when staff are absent due to illness and enables more flexible backfilling for other shifts as needed.

- Police Information Checks have become more efficient by utilizing programs designed to process Police Information Checks, reducing the time required to process each check and streamlining the overall workflow. This program is free to SPD but does have a small fee for the applicants.

Detective Division

- In November 2024, the Intelligence Section Sergeant duties were integrated into the Street Crime Unit to create a new recruiting Sergeant position in Staff Development. Over the past 12 months, we have found that further improvements can be realized by re-establishing the Intelligence Sergeant as a dedicated role. This position is critical in driving intelligence led policing and will lead to greater effectiveness in proactive enforcement and crime suppression. To accomplish this with existing resources, a Sergeant position has been eliminated in the Major Crime Unit which will now be organized as two teams, each comprised of a Sergeant and five Constables.

- The adoption of Axon's Digital Evidence Management System has reduced the workload of our two Digital Evidence Technicians by automating the transfer and cataloging of digital evidence collected by patrol investigators. Those positions will be restructured within the Administrative Division – Information Technology Section (as noted above) where they will take on new roles in processing Body Worn Camera footage, identifying suspects using facial screening software and adopting new investigative technologies. This move is being made in response to the increasing volume and complexity of investigations that rely upon digital evidence.

- In 2023, the Financial Crimes Section was integrated into the Major Crime Unit to reallocate positions to the Special Investigations Unit and Patrol Division. That restructuring reduced our capacity to investigate financial and cyber-crimes. We are addressing that gap by updating job descriptions and training our civilian IT staff to assist with these complex technology crimes investigations.

- The Critical Incident Scribe team will be moving to a civilian led model by December 2025. This will reduce standby and overtime costs and will reduce the collateral duty load on sworn staff.

FUNDAMENTAL COST DRIVERS

The 2026 provisional budget includes the following specific cost drivers:

- Increases associated to settled and anticipated wage settlements, increments and benefits require an increase of 3.35% ($1,744,357):
  - The Police Association collective agreement expired in December 2024; and
  - The CUPE collective agreement expired in December 2024.
- Increases to operating expenses including service contracts, building and fleet maintenance, result in a 2.02% ($1,054,480) increase.
- New resource requests result in an increase of 1.30% ($684,281).

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 2026 budget results from anticipated wage increases through the collective bargaining process.

In the 2026 provisional budget, neither integrated units nor E-Comm require additional funding increases. For integrated units, the annual increases that would typically be expected have been fully offset by the dissolution of one integrated unit, resulting in no net increase and therefore no additional funding required for 2026. In terms of E-Comm, the amount budgeted in 2025 was higher than the actual levy charged, and the 2026 E-Comm levy is anticipated to increase by only 0–2%. As a result, the 2026 E-Comm levy budget will not require an increase.

RESOURCE REQUESTS

Lines 6 to 11 set out the cost of additional positions required in 2026. To meet the evolving demands of public safety and uphold the high standards expected by the community, it is essential to invest in the necessary personnel and expertise. The request for 11 additional resources – comprising four sworn officers and seven civilian positions – is not simply a matter of increasing headcount, but a strategic response to mounting internal workload pressures, legislative changes, and justice system requirements. These new roles are critical for modernizing operational deployments, ensuring compliance, and implementing cost-saving strategies that maximize efficiency without compromising service quality. By proactively addressing capacity gaps, the department can better safeguard officer health, improve retention, and maintain the level of responsiveness and professionalism that our residents, businesses, and rightsholders expect. For each request, the costs reflect six months of wages and benefits. This practice, consistent with the District, provides the anticipated 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 2027 to annualize the full cost.

Line 6 - Community Safety Officer Program Expansion (4 civilians)

A strategic deployment of Community Safety Officers (CSOs) is essential to sustaining a safe and vibrant community. SPD introduced a CSO program with four personnel in 2020. This program has proven to be a modern, fiscally responsible solution, enabling sworn officers to focus on high-risk and complex calls for service by taking on lower risk calls and vital support duties such as traffic control, subpoena service, and scene security. This targeted approach not only maximizes the efficiency of police operations, but also directly contributes to officer health, retention, and morale by reducing burnout and allowing for a more balanced workload. By investing in four additional CSOs, we ensure that our department remains agile, responsive, and capable of meeting the growing and changing demands of public safety.

In response to the achieved benefits of the program, strategic internal changes were made to increase the number of CSOs from 4 to 8 in 2023 (no resource request). This increase proved to identify new opportunities to enhance efficiencies while improving policing and public safety services, including but not limited to:

- Reallocation of sworn police officers from specific administrative functions (front counter services) to critical frontline and investigative positions; and
- Introduction of CSOs to front counter services.

With recent legislative changes stemming from the Special Committee's Report on Police Act Reform, it is essential that all prisoner detention facilities in British Columbia comply with a staffing model that requires a new class of safety officers. As CSOs are classified as Special Municipal Constables, they meet the expectations of this new role and will be able to effectively fulfil the duties of a detention facility guard. The SPD detention facility is currently staffed by contracted Commissionaires, who are not designated as Special Municipal or Provincial Constables. Further, this model has proven to be challenging in maintaining a consistency in staffing and reliability in coverage. The SPD leadership team has demonstrated strategic foresight by planning a seamless transition from a third-party contractor to an SPD staffing model that prioritizes safety, risk management, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. By creating four new CSO positions, the department will ensure effective coverage and scheduling, while also mitigating excess overtime costs. This approach not only aligns with the new legislative requirements but also strengthens operational integrity, risk management, and public trust in our detention facility.

In addition to the efficiencies noted above, with this increase, our CSOs will be able to continue to provide important assistance to the frontline patrol officers, such as responding to online reports, conducting park patrols, monitoring and engaging with vulnerable persons to provide support and referrals, and to meaningfully contribute to the responsibility of temporary overnight sheltering bylaw enforcement.

The following data demonstrates an increased demand for park checks and bylaw enforcement within Saanich parks between 2024 and 2025. Of note, the District's Bylaw Department does not proactively or reactively contribute to enforcing the Temporary Overnight Sheltering Bylaw. The Saanich Police Department is solely responsible for conducting proactive park checks and responding to bylaw complaints made by residents.

# of Park Checks	# of Complaints	# of Shelters	# of Occupants
2024: 1629	2024: 81	2024: 295	2024: 322
2025: 1962	2025: 88	2025: 409	2025: 421

- Cost of time spent on park checks in 2025: CSOs ($1,286.74), sworn officers ($39,032.14).

Patrol officers are spending increasingly more time conducting park checks, enforcing the District's Temporary Overnight Sheltering Bylaw, and engaging with the homeless population. With the lack of affordable housing and temporary shelters for the unhoused populations in Greater Victoria combined with Public Safety and Community Wellbeing strategies to remove tent encampments from street locations in Victoria, people are being displaced and re-locating in new areas that include Saanich parks and other locations namely Uptown, Tillicum/Gorge, and Shelbourne corridors.

This has resulted in an increase in complaints from Saanich residents and businesses as the frequency of open drug use, discarded needles, and loitering near other community services and vulnerable persons, such as daycares continues to grow. Increasing the number of CSOs will provide the department the ability to integrate CSOs into the park patrol and bylaw enforcement model, while minimizing the requirement of sworn police officers.

The CSO Program stands out as a highly effective recruiting strategy for sworn police officers, seamlessly embedding Community Safety Officers into the organization and culture. By providing firsthand exposure to policing and public safety duties, standards, policies, and procedures, the program offers a unique opportunity for relationship building and performance assessment. The robust training and operational experience not only prepare CSOs for the demands of policing but also enables the Recruiting Section to accurately determine each candidate's readiness and suitability for sworn police officer positions. The program's success is evident, with SPD having already hired 8 CSOs as sworn officers, demonstrating its value as a proven pathway for developing capable and committed professionals.

The cost of $174,432 on line 6 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

Line 7 - Administrative Assistant – Staff Development Division (1 civilian)

The rapid growth of the Staff Development Division – from four to ten personnel since 2018 – reflects the department's commitment to meeting higher training standards, recruiting demands, and supporting employee health and wellness. However, this expansion has place significant strain on the division's lone administrative support assistant, resulting in overcapacity, increased stress, and rising overtime costs. Introducing an administrative assistant is not just a practical solution; it is a strategic necessity. This role will provide confidential, high-level support to supervisors and senior leadership, streamline operations, and ensure business continuity. By balancing workloads and increasing efficiency, the administrative assistant will enhance the division's responsiveness and productivity while contributing to the wellbeing of its staff.

The cost of $53,853 on line 7 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

Line 8 – Research Analyst (1 civilian)

The addition of a Research Analyst position to the Research and Policy Section represents a practical and cost-effective solution to increasing analytic capacity within the Saanich Police Department. This Section plays a vital role in enabling the department to define and advance strategic priorities, establish the processes needed to achieve them, and identify and support initiatives that enhance performance by embedding evidence-based practices into organizational decision-making.

The current Research and Policy Analysts have the skills, capabilities, and expertise to address organizational gaps in data management and analytics. However, their capacity to fully deliver on these functions is constrained by the volume of time-intensive tasks such as mandatory audits, data entry, cleaning, and report preparation that could be effectively managed with the addition of one Analyst. By assuming responsibility for essential data tasks, the Analyst would enable the analytic/research team to enhance the response and support to departmental strategic priorities, such as planning and forecasting, risk mitigation, program evaluation, project management, and interdivisional coordination.

The addition of an Analyst position to the Research and Policy Section would significantly enhance the Department's ability to produce timely, actionable insights and implement data-informed improvements. This structure strengthens the section's overall capacity to deliver high-impact, data-driven recommendations to support senior leadership decisions.

The cost of $70,509 on line 8 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

Line 9 - Financial Analyst (1 civilian)

To ensure the continued integrity and resilience of the Saanich Police Department's financial operations, the addition of a financial analyst is essential. Currently, the department's $52+ million operating budget is managed by the Director of Finance and Procurement, a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), with oversight of the Police Board's Finance Committee.

This limited resourcing structure introduces vulnerabilities and risks related to continuity, error, and compliance. In the absence of the Director of Finance and Procurement, the department is not sufficiently resourced or equipped to respond to immediate challenges in maintaining accurate financial reporting, budget management, and adherence to accounting standards and municipal policies.

The financial analyst role would provide critical support in preparing budget submissions, analysing cost drivers, and responding to ad hoc requests from staff, the Police Board, and Council. This critical investment will strengthen internal controls, support succession planning, and ensure that institutional knowledge is retained, thereby safeguarding the department's ability to deliver high-quality police services to the community in a fiscally responsible manner.

The cost of $58,303 of line 9 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

Line 10 - Mental Health First Response Constables (2 sworn)

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 has been staffed by VIHA mental health professionals with the support of a police officer position funded by the Area Chiefs. While this program has enjoyed 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, all participating police partners will be withdrawing from the current integrated unit as of December 31, 2025.

As previously reported, two regional police agencies – the Victoria Police Department and West Shore RCMP have implemented new Co-Response Teams (CRTs) to reinforce the crisis response framework in their own jurisdiction. This model has proven to be very successful in reducing the number of Mental Health Act apprehensions while continuing robust communications and relations with Island Health.

The Saanich Police Department has been advised that Island Health is not in a position, currently, to provide mental health nurses for a Co-Response Team in Saanich. Although this creates a barrier to achieving the Co-Response model in its full form, the SPD leadership team has determined that the creation of a police mental health specialty team would achieve significant benefits related to our frontline response to Mental Health Act calls and apprehensions. Two teams comprised of one mental health police constable would be the primary and first response to calls for service where a person's mental health is likely a significant contributing factor to the issues being reported.

These teams would provide an effective, efficient, and proportional response to assist persons experiencing mental health challenges in a trauma-informed way.

Given the recent dissolution of the Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team, The Saanich Police Department needs to strategically position itself with additional resources to effectively respond to mental health calls for service. The overall goal is to establish a Co-Response Team in collaboration with Island Health. This step would ensure that services continue, while preparing SPD for the partnership with Island Health mental health nurses.

The SPD is requiring funding for two new police mental health constable positions to be dedicated to the Patrol Division. The creation and implementation of this critical service will address the gap created by the dissolution of IMCRT while upholding our key strategic priority of "Service Excellence" in pursuit of our Vision, to provide, "…the highest quality police service that inspires pride, respect, and trust".

The cost of $163,592 on line 10 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

Line 11 - Patrol Constables (2 sworn)

The Patrol Division is the largest operational division in our organization and provides frontline, uniform police service to the municipality of Saanich 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Currently, each Patrol platoon has a complement of 15 constables, which has seen little growth since 2016. Prior to 2016, platoon strength remained at 13 constables for more than a decade, which compromised the effectiveness of frontline patrol response, officer safety, and service delivery. This prolonged period of stagnated growth created a staffing deficit that we are still attempting to correct. To meet the public safety needs and expectations of residents and businesses of Saanich, we need to sustain reliable and responsive policing services. To do this, it is incumbent upon us to invest in consistent, incremental growth that reflects the changes, demands, and growth of the community being served.

A review of our PRIME data indicates increases in the amount of time patrol officers spend on calls for service or investigations. Reasons for the extended time at calls includes, but is not limited to, increased complexity of calls, trauma informed investigations, crisis intervention and de-escalation tactics, disclosure requirements, changes to critical incident response tactics, technological sophistication, and Mental Health Act apprehensions - hospital wait times.

Additionally, the nature of the calls for service continues to evolve and change. Police officers not only respond to calls relating to criminal offences and public safety, but they are often the first, and sometimes the only, level of response to many complex social issues including persons experiencing homelessness (encampments in parks), substance abuse and addiction, and mental health related issues.

As the District of Saanich continues to grow and make strategic and modern changes to road infrastructure and design, transportation hubs, and speed limits as well as increasing the number of affordable multi-person housing units, it is critical to assess the impact these have on frontline policing and public safety services. The Patrol Division, including the Traffic Safety Unit, have experienced increased calls and complaints related to changes made within the community as it grows and develops, which translates to increased call loads, prolonged response times, and less time to conduct proactive policing and crime prevention with the current available resources.

The current platoon numbers do not provide adequate available frontline police resources to address the current and growing workload. Minimum staffing levels on the platoons range from 7 to 8 constables (depending on the day/night of the week) and the platoons are often unable to effectively manage multiple high-risk critical incidents, which are happening more frequently, with available on-duty staff. This staffing situation increases personal risk to patrol officers, which directly affects operational stress injuries, morale, and retention. These external forces have a negative impact on officers' health and wellness, which has resulted in the highest rate of officer resignations in our organization's history. Since 2020, there have been 21 sworn officer resignations – all of which require new hiring, which is very costly.

As a result of changing legislation and policing standards, downloading of social services, and the changing dynamics of crime (violence and civil disorder), the officers assigned to the Patrol Division are overloaded and under resourced which is having a significant and negative impact to officer safety, health, wellness and service delivery. It is imperative that our frontline resource levels in the Patrol Division moderately increased to effectively maintain high quality service and public safety for the citizens of Saanich. With the addition of two police constables in conjunction with internal restructuring, all four platoons will increase by one constable, allowing for minimum strength per shift to reach a consistent level of 8 constables. This number is required to manage a critical incident without depleting resources that are required to respond to ongoing calls for service in Saanich.

The cost of $163,592 on line 11 reflects six months of salary and benefits based on funding commencing July 2026.

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 2026.

CAPITAL / TRANSFERS FROM RESERVES

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

Table 2: 2026 Capital / Reserve Fund Expenditures and Funding Sources

2026 Capital	Source of Funds				Budget
		Public Safety and Security Reserve Fund			
	Core	IT Replacement	Fleet Replacement	PERF	2026
Annual Vehicle Replacement	316,817		113,183		430,000
Computer Hardware and Software	17,500	491,943			509,443
Office Equipment	61,134				61,134
Investigative Equipment	35,000				35,000
Officer and Public Safety Equipment	100,778			175,000	275,778
Infrastructure Improvements	45,985				45,985
Total Capital Expenditures	**577,214**	**491,943**	**113,183**	**175,000**	**1,357,340**
2026 Reserve Funds		776,627	870,040	564,069	2,210,736
2026 Year-end Reserve Balance		**284,684**	**756,857**	**389,069**	**1,430,610**

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 2026 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 $577,214.

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 2025 year-end balance of the Public Safety and Security Reserve Fund for capital initiatives is estimated at $1,323,462. Contributions for 2026 are estimated to be $887,274, leaving $2,210,736 available for 2026 projects. The Police Board has recommended expenditures in the amount of $780,126 to be funded through reserve accounts, leaving a balance of $1,430,610. This balance will be required for ongoing fleet and IT replacement, which are subject to high and low demand years.

i. IT Replacement

In 2026, IT projects amount to $509,443:

- There is currently a balance of $391,329 in this account.
- $385,298 will be transferred into the account in 2025.
- Available balance for 2026 expenditures is $776,627.
- $491,943 of the purchases is considered inventory replacement and therefore will be funded through the IT Replacement Reserve Account.

- The remaining $17.500 required for IT projects that are considered new, or outside of replacement, will be funded through the Core Capital accounts.

ii. Fleet Replacement

In 2026, 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 $316,817 will be funded from Core Capital, with the remaining $113,183 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 ($289,618 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 2026, two projects have been identified to be funded through the Police Equipment Replacement Fund. The total commitment is $175,000, which will leave approximately $389,069 remaining in the fund at 2026 year-end.

1. $25,000 is required for the replacement of equipment for frontline operations, as the inventory for this specific equipment will reach the end of its useful service life in 2026.
2. $150,000 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 2026.

COUNCIL'S REQUESTS

1. Forecasts & Multi-year Financial Planning

During the 2025 budget consultation process, Council has communicated its desire for the Board to provide them with a five-year financial plan.

The 2025 approved budget included one-time funding for an evidence-based study to explore and identify what appropriate resources are required to adhere to current and anticipated police standards. This study, currently being finalized by a third-party experienced and professional consultant will provide quantitative justification for adding, reducing, or redirecting budgeted positions and resources within the organization, and will forecast anticipated staffing needs based on estimated growth demands within the District of Saanich. Results from this study will therefore 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 late in early 2026.

2. Budget Reduction Strategies / Scenarios

The Board historically included budget reduction scenarios with the provisional budget. The budget guideline for Saanich calls for reduction scenarios to be prepared in the amounts of 1.0%, 2.0%, 3.0% and 4.0%. Based on the proposed provisional budget, a 1.0% reduction will be approximately $556,830, whereas a 4.0% reduction will be $2,227,319.

Since approximately 80% of the provisional budget represents labour costs, and the remaining 20% for non-discretionary service contracts (for ex E-Comm, PRIME BC, CREST), any reduction of the budget would result in eliminating existing staffing positions, leading to unacceptable service reductions, especially when Saanich's population continues to grow.

The proposed budget is designed to "hold-the-line" addressing only the most critical requirements to maintain operations and meet the public safety expectations of the public. Any reduction in funding would risk business continuity and diminish the quality-of-service residents and businesses rely on every day. The resource requests are not just numbers, they represent dedicated professionals who protect, serve, and build trust within the community. Investing in this provisional budget means investing in a safer, more resilient Saanich where public confidence and wellbeing are prioritized.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND COMPARISONS

The Saanich Police Department exemplifies what it means to deliver high-quality, professional police service to both the municipality and surrounding region. Through a steadfast commitment to public safety, awareness, and education, the department continually strengthens relationships and builds trust and confidence. Even as the investment required to maintain a healthy, high-functioning police service rises, SPD consistently operates at a lower cost than comparable departments – while still enjoying robust community support. This remarkable balance is a testament to the department's dedication to serving the community with integrity, accountability, and excellence.

Appendix A contains an excerpt from The Police Resources in British Columbia 2023 report. The comparison highlights the Saanich Police cost of $350 per capita and a population to officer ratio of 756:1, compared to the provincial average cost of $490 per capita and a population to officer ratio of 567:1.

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

Municipality	Population Per Officer	Cost Per Capita
Abbotsford	706	$444
Delta	632	$393
Victoria	472	$598
Saanich	756	$350

As Saanich continues to flourish as a vibrant and growing community, the demands on public safety have never been greater. The 2026 provisional budget is not just a financial plan – it is a strategic commitment to incrementally increase and modernize the Saanich Police Department's levels of service. Having reached maximum efficiency, SPD now faces the critical challenge of adapting to evolving needs with creativity and innovation. The requested resources are essential for sustaining the department's ability to respond effectively, ensuring that every officer is equipped to protect and serve. By prioritizing modernization and the health and wellness of all staff, the executive leadership team is dedicated to building a safer, stronger future for everyone in Saanich.

RECOMMENDATION

That the approved 2026 Saanich Police Board Budget be endorsed as presented.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration and approval,

The Saanich Police Board

End of Report

Appendix A

2023 Municipal Police Departments Resources

MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENTS[2]

Municipality	Population	Auth. Strength[14]	*Adjusted Strength*[7]	Pop. Per Officer	CCC Offences	Crime Rate	Case Load	Total Costs[8,14]	Cost Per Capita
Abbotsford Mun[7,10]	151,089	214	*221*	706	9,628	64	44	$67,150,469	$444
Central Saanich Mun	18,370	23	23	799	471	26	20	$5,225,944	$284
Delta Mun[7,10,15]	122,685	194	*197*	632	4,818	39	24	$48,230,776	$393
Nelson City Mun	11,875	21	21	565	1,116	94	53	$5,378,265	$453
New Westminster Mun[7]	88,363	114	*117*	756	5,591	63	48	$33,246,014	$376
Oak Bay Mun	18,849	24	24	785	470	25	20	$6,311,213	$335
Port Moody Mun[7]	37,699	52	*54*	703	1,015	27	19	$14,894,058	$395
Saanich Mun	125,473	166	166	756	4,486	36	27	$43,904,217	$350
Vancouver Mun[7]	733,718	1,448	1,448	507	48,812	67	34	$406,897,433	$555
Victoria Mun[16]	120,433	255	255	472	11,612	96	46	$71,995,327	$598
West Vancouver Mun[7,10]	50,674	79	*82*	620	2,467	49	30	$21,094,251	$416
Total	**1,479,228**	**2,590**	**2,608**	**567**	**90,486**	**61**	**35**	**$724,327,967**	**$490**

Participating LMD Integrated Team municipalities and their adjusted strength figures, including the Municipal Police Units (RCMP) Regular Members and Municipal Police Department's sworn officers, are *italicized* in the Municipal Police Statistics, 2023 table. The adjusted strength has been used to calculate population per officer and case load.