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\$5.7M being restored to Vancouver police budget may lead to increase in property taxes: city



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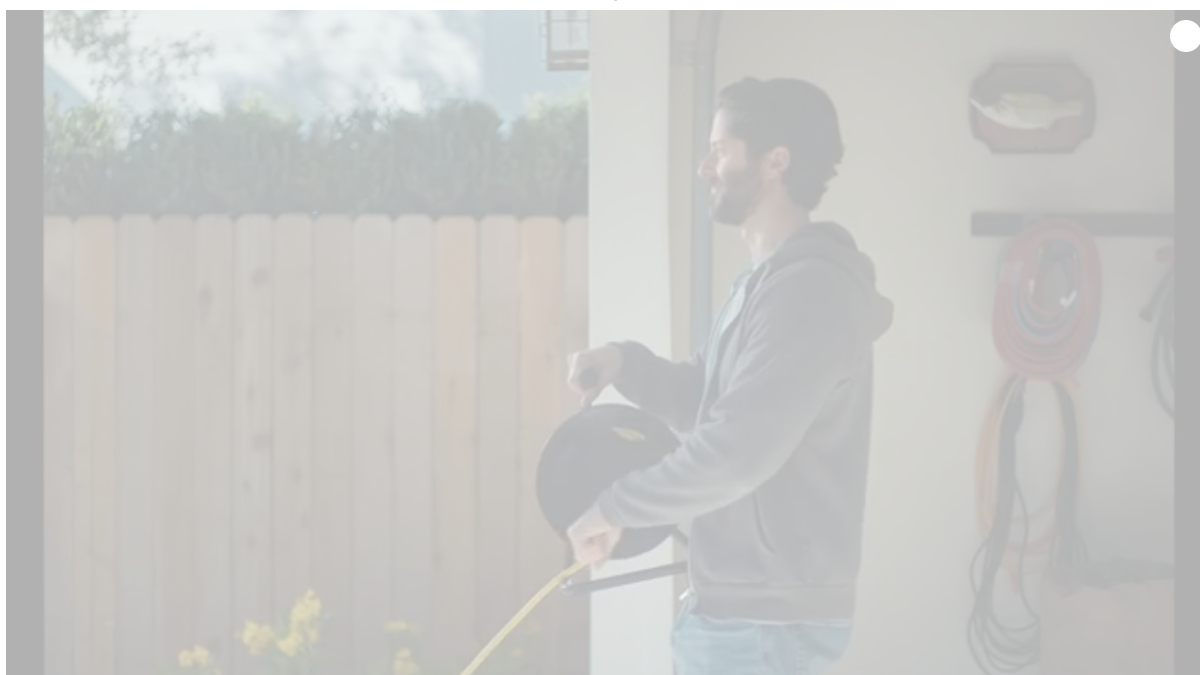


The Vancouver Police Department says it won an appeal to reverse a funding cut, which means millions of dollars will go back into the agency's budget.

VPD Chief Adam Palmer announced the outcome Monday, saying the province agreed \$5.7 million should be restored to the budget. The 2021 budget was cut down after a vote by Vancouver city council in late 2020.

"The shortfall had a direct impact on the number of police officers the VPD was able to hire to meet the city's complex policing needs," Palmer said in a statement.

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"Since that time, Vancouver has been gripped by an abundance of public safety challenges, including the ongoing Lower Mainland gang conflict, a surge in violent street crime, nearly 1,000 protests, concerning levels of hate crime, and a growing number of people who tell us they just don't feel as safe as they used to."

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Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart said in a statement the decision to tighten the VPD's budget was made earlier in the pandemic. "When

to tighten the VPD's budget was made earlier in the pandemic, when all departments were asked to do more with less."

"It is important to note that at no time did the Vancouver Police Department lack access to requested funds thanks to the city's budget reserves," Stewart's statement said.

"I am glad we finally have a decision after waiting for more than a year for this report."

Under Section 27(3) of B.C.'s Police Act, disputes over an item or amount in a municipal police budget can be sent to the provincial director of policing for review. The director must then "determine whether the item or amount should be included" and inform the public safety minister, police board and city council.

The Vancouver Police Board applied for a budget review in 2021.

According to the city, more than \$1 million is spent each day on policing and the budget has increased from \$317 million in 2019 to \$367 million in 2022. The city said the VPD's budget represents 21 per cent of the city's overall budget.

For this year, the city said it'll use reserves to offset the \$5.7 million, because this year's budget has already been approved. For next year, however, the city said permanent funding will be required and may result in an increased property tax by about 0.6 per cent.



Vancouver Police Department headquarters is seen in Vancouver, on Saturday, January 9, 2015. (CTV News)
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