

# Niverville sketches out 2022 budget

by NICOLE BUFFIE

A preliminary 2022 budget released by the Town of Niverville promises tax increases below the rate of inflation, the beginning and completion of multiple development projects, and a focus on residential and commercial growth.

Niverville council met periodically throughout December to craft a preliminary budget with numerous large-scale projects on the docket, while also putting projects promised to residents years ago on the backburner.

"Some things will just get pushed back," Mayor Myron Dyck said. "We're trying to do still a little bit in all the departments as opposed to cutting a department in its entirety."

Dyck said council wants to keep tax increases below the rate of provincial inflation. Taxes will increase by three percent, two percent below inflation. The increase will see a \$57.75 property tax hike on a home valued at \$287,100.

Major projects include the construction of a 6,000-sq-ft. RCMP detachment in the town's administration building, and designs on a new intersection at Krahn Road and Provincial Road 311. The four-way intersection will include streetlights, crosswalks, and road repaving.

The RCMP detachment comes with a 40

percent increase in the town's protective services budget, accounting for an additional \$258,323 of spending.

The town will also begin expanding its water treatment plant by putting a planned sewer line replacement on the backburner.

"We can't replace the lines until the sewage has somewhere to go," Dyck said.

After the 2021 census data is released later this year, Niverville is expected to exceed 6,000 residents. The water treatment plant expansion can accommodate wastewater of up to 15,000 residents.

"We're setting ourselves up for the future," Dyck said.

Council also wants to bring diagnostic services to Open Health Niverville.

When the town purchased the medical clinic in 2020, priority was placed on bringing services to town so residents wouldn't have to travel into Winnipeg. Dyck said diagnostics "have the best chance of coming to fruition." The cost of the project is still unknown.

Smaller projects include rehabilitating Opa's Park and designing a new space to commemorate Niverville's history, Station Lands Park, to be located on the south side of Provincial Road 311 at the site of the original Canadian Pacific Railway station. Council also plans to finish rehabilitating the dog park.

The town's 2022 budget will be finalized in the spring after a public hearing is held.



Penner International is looking at redeploying drivers who refuse vaccination after Jan. 15, when a federal vaccine mandate takes effect.

## Trucking industry grapples with looming vaccine mandate

by NICOLE BUFFIE

An upcoming federal mandate for truckers on either side of the Canada-U.S. border has businesses pivoting to re-deploy unvaccinated drivers and associations calling on the government to delay the mandate.

Beginning Jan. 15, all truckers crossing the border into Canada must be fully vaccinated. Come Jan. 22, the same rule will apply to drivers entering the U.S.

Critics of the mandate say Canada's supply chain will be further disrupted, resulting in shipping delays and product shortages.

Les Kehler, general manager of Penner International, said he hoped the government would change their tune on the mandate.

"Maybe doing some testing, allowing drivers do some testing versus just outright saying you have to be double vaccinated," Kehler said.

"So it's not great news for us, not for us and our customers."

The Steinbach-based trucking company employs 250 drivers to service long-haul routes across Canada and the U.S. with approximately 30 drivers crossing the border into the U.S. every day.

Federal statistics show \$2 billion worth of cross-border trade happens daily and 70 percent of it is done by truck.

Kehler said until recently, Penner operated "as usual" despite North American supply chain disruptions during the pandemic. With the mandate, he said those deliveries will be pushed back even further.

"This is going to reduce even more capacity that can cross the border, it'll make it even worse than it was," Kehler said.

Provencher MP Ted Falk echoed Kehler's sentiments.

"It's going to affect the price of goods and services," Falk, an outspoken supporter of the trucking industry, said.

"People will continue to see prices increase."

Statistics Canada reported in November the nationwide inflation rate was at 4.7 percent, the highest it's been since 2003.

Falk said the mandate may set a precedent for further vaccine mandates. On Jan. 7, Federal Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos said during a press conference that broad provincial vaccine mandates could be on the horizon, citing unvaccinated individuals who are creating a burden on the health-care system.

"Our health care system in Canada is fragile. Our people are tired and the only way as

we know through COVID-19, be it this variant or any future variant, is through vaccination," Duclos said.

Falk blamed the strain on the health-care system on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to spend money on lockdowns, rather than on the medical system to accommodate each wave of the pandemic.

"There's a lot smarter, proactive approaches to take to dealing with health crisis and vaccine mandates are not the right approach. I don't support it," Falk said.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance called on Ottawa and Washington to delay the start of the mandate.

"CTA strongly believes the health benefits of vaccines are unquestionable. But that does not change the fact that any substantial reduction of commercial drivers, when there's already an acute shortage, would further disrupt a very fragile supply chain and the economy," president Stephen Laskowski said in a release.

"Simply put, the supply chain desperately needs more drivers to deliver goods and products that consumers depend on—not less."

The federal government has made no indication it will delay or alter the mandate.

Aaron Dolyniuk of the Manitoba Trucking Association, which represents 320 companies and tens of thousands of truck drivers, estimated the mandate will pull a significant number of drivers off the road.

"Vaccine uptake within our industry, from our math, is about the same as it is nationally and provincially and regionally," he said.

"Some companies will be impacted quite a bit, you know, up to 20 percent and more of their driver fleet may not be vaccinated...15 to 20 percent of the population is not vaccinated and that also speaks for our industry as well."

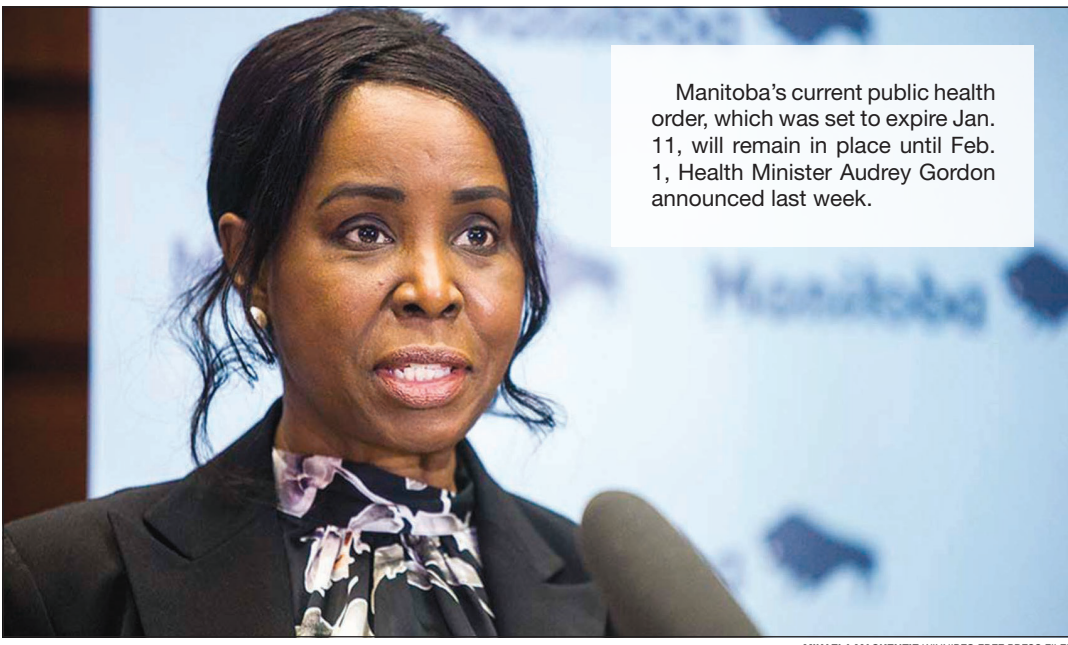
While most truckers are fully immunized, Dolyniuk said, the small percentage of those who aren't still account for a portion of the cross-border supply chain which will not be able to be transported in a worst-case scenario.

"There will potentially be more freight than there are trucks available."

Kehler said Penner International is aiming to employ unvaccinated drivers on their own side of the border.

"We're not looking to get rid of anybody... we'll see if we can find work for them domestically," he said.

"Hopefully we can do that for them and find enough work for them so they can keep earning a living."



Manitoba's current public health order, which was set to expire Jan. 11, will remain in place until Feb. 1, Health Minister Audrey Gordon announced last week.

## Public health order lengthened

by JORDAN ROSS

Manitoba's public health order has been extended to Feb. 1, Health Minister Audrey Gordon announced Friday, as the Omicron coronavirus variant continues to tax hospitals and overwhelm testing centres.

The three-week extension of the order, which was originally due to expire Jan. 11, gives the province time to "gather data and monitor the impacts of the Omicron variant," Gordon said in a release.

Gordon said the province will also remain at the orange or restricted level on the pandemic response system.

Gordon noted ICU numbers are "relatively stable," but didn't rule out intervening before Feb. 1 if the situation worsens.

"Nothing is off the table and we will act swiftly in the weeks ahead if further action is required to protect Manitobans," she said.

In the meantime, the province said it is working to improve access to testing and to increase the supply of tests available to the public.

The province also claimed that "Manitoba continues to have some of the strictest public health orders in place in the country."

That statement glosses over regions of Ontario and Quebec, where restaurant dining rooms, bars, gyms, and museums are currently closed.

In eastern Ontario, private gatherings are currently limited to five people indoors and 10 people outdoors.

In western Quebec, a nightly curfew is in effect, churches are closed except for funerals, and indoor gatherings can't involve more than one household bubble.


### Rapid test program expanded

On Tuesday, Families Minister Rochelle Squires and Education Minister Cliff Cullen announced rapid antigen testing programs for more designated critical service workers.

"Tests will be provided for all designated staff in critical service areas who are symptomatic and work directly with clients and vulnerable populations," Squires said in a release.

Eligibility for rapid antigen tests is being expanded to include all designated staff in critical service areas who are symptomatic and work in early learning and child-care facilities, with Community Living disABILITY Services service providers, with child and family services group care providers, in home and family violence shelters, in frontline Manitoba Families positions, and as schoolteachers or staff with direct and prolonged contact with K-12 students.

The tests will be provided directly to staff who are already showing COVID-19 symptoms and are scheduled to work in the next three days.



### SUNRISE SCHOOL DIVISION KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION and Grade 1 Beginners – for September 2022

**Eligibility Requirement for**  
 Kindergarten: Children must be five (5) years of age on or before December 31, 2022  
 Grade 1: Children must be six (6) years of age on or before December 31, 2022  
 Children previously enrolled in Kindergarten classes DO NOT need to be re-registered.

**Dates of Registration**  
**Monday, January 31 to Friday, February 4, 2022**

**Registration on-line at [www.sunrisesd.ca](http://www.sunrisesd.ca)**

Programs in three (3) languages offered to all children beginning in Kindergarten or Grade 1:

Anola School	(204) 866-2962	English
Centennial School	(204) 345-2462	English
École Beausejour Early Years School	(204) 268-2664	English & French Immersion
École Dugald School	(204) 853-7929	English & French Immersion
École Powerview School	(204) 367-2296	English & French Immersion
Gillis School	(204) 268-4353	English
Hazelridge School	(204) 755-2214	English
Oak Bank Elementary School	(204) 444-2473	English & English/Ukrainian
Whitemouth School	(204) 348-2595	English

*Proof of Age must be presented at time of Registration.  
 A Birth Certificate would be preferred. However, if a Birth Certificate is unavailable, then a Baptismal Certificate will be accepted.  
 Instructions for securely submitting identification will be included with the registration forms.*

Entry into the French Immersion and English/Ukrainian Bilingual Programs is open to all children of Kindergarten and Grade 1 age who possess little or no knowledge of the French or Ukrainian language, but who wish to become bilingual by learning French or Ukrainian as a second language.



Les Kehler, general manager of Penner International, hopes the government relents.

## Tourism survey opens

by GREG VANDERMEULEN

Tourism organizations are being urged to take an online survey that marks the beginning of a regional approach to solving challenges that COVID-19 has brought upon the industry.

Eastman Tourism and Community Futures Winnipeg River have joined forces to begin a Tourism Sector Development Strategy.

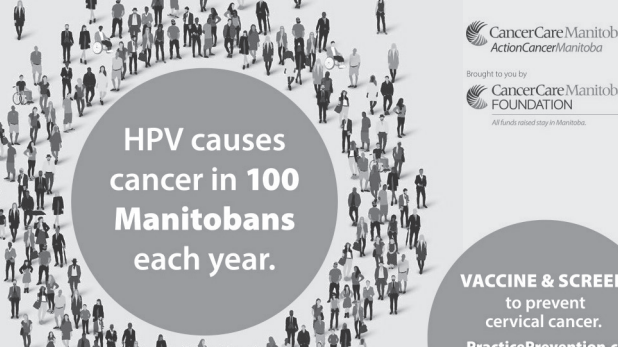
"The purpose of this strategy is to develop a balanced and sustainable regional approach to enhance the visitor economy while putting the community and environment first," the two organizations wrote in a Jan. 5 press release.

The strategy will focus on common challenges and opportunities that tourism businesses and organizations face.

Finding out what those challenges are is the project's first priority.

Anyone who operates a tourism business or non-profit organization working in accommodations, food and beverage, meetings, events, attractions, travel services, or transportation is urged to take part in the survey.

To receive a link, email [karklin@cfwr.mb.ca](mailto:karklin@cfwr.mb.ca) or call 204-345-2514.



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