



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Will Pearce, Chief Administrative Officer **FILE:** 4000-02

PC: Kevin Poole, Director, Community Safety, Lands and Administration **DATE:** November 14, 2022

FROM: Darren Lees, Manager Protective Services

SUBJECT: 2022 SEASONAL SECURITY SUMMARY

Based on a recommendation from the Activate Safety Task Force, Council approved a seasonal overnight security presence in the Downtown Business Improvements Primary and Secondary Area (BIA) beginning in 2020 (Attachment 1 – Map of BIA Primary and Secondary Area). A Service Level Adjustment to continue the downtown seasonal security contract in 2021 was endorsed by Council during budget discussions. The security contract was extended into its third and final term for 2022.

The mobile security service operated 7 days per week from 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. between May 1 and September 30. The marked security vehicle maintained a visible security presence during the overnight hours with a primary duty to observe, record, and report occurrences within the downtown core business improvement areas. As per contract details, security personnel are to maintain a mobile security presence through the overnight hours and are not exit their vehicle to engage with individuals. Should officers witness any suspicious, illegal or unsafe activities, they are to initiate an immediate call for service to the appropriate agency (RCMP, Vernon Fire Rescue Services etc.).

Recorded observations on both City property and private property included individuals with temporary shelters, individuals gathered on sidewalks, in lanes, parking lots, alcoves, parks and around the east and west downtown public washrooms. In many cases, individuals were not in contravention of a municipal bylaw or provincial statute but were noted by the security officer. Patrol report details consisted of patrol date, name of security officer, time, nearest address and relevant details (who, what, when where) for each observation or call for service. The officer also recorded if the observation or call for service was east or west of Highway 97 and whether it was on private or City property. Where calls for service were initiated regarding suspicious, illegal or unsafe activities, the security officer also noted the agency called to respond. Patrol reports were submitted by the contractor to Protective Services each week for evaluation and reporting.

An analysis of the 1,069 recorded observations by the security service between May 1 to September 30, 2022, revealed that all observations involved street entrenched individuals. 50.1% of the security service observations were made on City streets, lanes, downtown parks, the bus exchange and public washrooms, while the other 49.9% were made on private property where individuals were observed in private

alcoves, doorways and private parking areas accessed off a lane. Further analysis revealed that 52% of security service observations occurred in the BIA primary area while the other 48% of observations occurred in the BIA secondary area (see Attachment 1).

Where necessary, security officers reported overnight calls for service to the RCMP, Vernon Fire Rescue Services (VFRS), BC Ambulance, City Operations or Bylaw Compliance for follow up. Over the duration of the 2022 contract, 8 calls for service were reported for first responder follow up. The RCMP received 1 call for service while 7 calls for service were reported to VFRS. An unsecure premise, where a door was left open at a business after hours was reported to the RCMP while the 7 calls for service to VFRS involved small fires in the downtown area. These were warming fires started by unhoused individuals with 6 calls for service on public property and 1 on private property. No immediate concerns were reported to City Operations, Bylaw Compliance or BC Ambulance.

The Executive Director of the Downtown Vernon Association (DVA) was contacted for comment regarding the 2022 Seasonal Security Service operations. The Executive Director advised that the DVA had not received any direct feedback on overnight security operations. Bylaw Compliance Officers have noted that there are several mobile security companies under private contracts operating in and around the downtown core each night.

Council has dedicated approximately \$120,000 for the three-year seasonal security contract which has now ended. A total of 32 calls for service were reported over the duration of the contract as shown in the table below. Based on the limited calls for service, Administration is recommending that Council not proceed with the program in 2023.

Seasonal Security Calls for Service Contract Summary				
	2020	2021	2022	Total
RCMP	10	6	1	17
VFRS	1	1	7	9
Bylaw Compliance	4	0	0	4
City Operations	0	1	0	1
BC Ambulance	1	0	0	1
Total	16	8	8	32

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive the memorandum titled “2022 Seasonal Security Summary” dated November 14, 2022, respectfully submitted by the Manager, Protective Services for information.

Alternative:

THAT Council receive the memorandum titled “2022 Seasonal Security Summary” dated November 14, 2022, respectfully submitted by the Manager, Protective Services;

AND FURTHER, that Council approve \$40,000 for the operation of the seasonal security contract in 2023 to be funded from the 2021 year end unexpended, uncommitted funds with a current balance of \$154,528.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Lees', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Darren Lees
Manager, Protective Services

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Map of City of Vernon Business Improvement Area

Downtown Vernon Business Improvement Area Map

